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# JUVENILIA

# JUVENILIA:

*BEING A SECOND SERIES OF*

## ESSAYS ON SUNDRY ÆSTHETICAL QUESTIONS

BY

*VERNON LEE*

Violet Paget

Boston
ROBERTS BROTHERS
3 SOMERSET STREET
1887

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# JUVENILIA:

## TO MY FRIEND CARLO PLACCI.



# JUVENILIA:

## TO MY FRIEND CARLO PLACCI.

IN calling this volume "Juvenilia," I do not intend to suggest that I consider myself as already and utterly in the sere and yellow; although I may have occasionally put great store upon the abyss of years separating twenty-five from thirty, in order to obtain from you, my dear Carlo, more patience for my theories and sermonings.

My meaning is not that. Do you remember, among the allegories on the floor of Siena Cathedral, the little fifteenth-century figures representing the various ages of man? Among them is Youth: a boy holding a hawk. Now there is no reason

why a hawk should not be held equally by a man of mature age; and the good people of the Renaissance, who saw their great captains and orators and merchants and reverend signiors of various descriptions ride out a-hawking many times and oft, were certainly aware of this. But whereas to the mature man hawking is but a mere holiday pastime; to the youth it and all similar sports are the most serious matters in the world; indeed, the only matter for which a serious creature can be expected to exist. Hence the hawk is on the wrist, not of the mature man, but of the boy; though the one may bring back whole bags of partridges, and the latter but a solitary brace of sparrows.

Similarly in the case of these essays. I do not imagine that æsthetical questions are fit only for immature young people—forgive what seems a personal reflexion—nearer twenty than thirty. I mean that, in many cases, in my own case certainly, and

in yours I suspect, they are, up to a certain age, the only, or very nearly the only, questions which seem thoroughly engrossing. Later we care for them still, and perhaps fully as much; but we care for other questions also. It is the case of the boy with the hawk; and for this reason I class such matters as "Juvenilia." And, therefore, my dear Carlo, I dedicate this little volume to you, not because I conceive you to be still in the phase when only things of this sort seem important; but because, on the contrary, you appear to be emerging from that intellectual boyhood; and I would therefore fain talk with you, now that the serious interests of the soul are beginning to push aside its mere pleasant pastimes, of the relative values of these things, and of what is due to each.

You will think me, perhaps, unjust, to my own past, and to what is still your present. The Beautiful, you will say, the Beautiful thus contemptuously classified

under the head of "Juvenilia," is the beautiful not merely of material objects, but of the soul. We, who are young—and none the worse for our youth (you continue, and I agree with you)—are not mere fiddle-faddle dilettanti, adorers of roulades and Japanese lacquer and "Odes Funambulesques." We are serious; and seriously seeking for the beautiful, and for what is the same as the beautiful, the good.

I know it. In those earliest years of spiritual existence, we are far removed from every baseness. The danger of baseness, indeed, comes later, with the consciousness of imperfection and conflict, with the necessity of making a choice. Taken in themselves, those early days of thought and feeling are exquisitely calm and pure; we require their memory later, as a refuge from present reality. The only pity is that this comparative Elysium was never a reality, but only a phantom place of our own fantastic building.

It came home to me very keenly, like the taste or the scent of some fruit or flower not seen for years, the peculiar flavour, I would call it, of those æsthetic, classic, Goethian days, while reading Pater's "Marius the Epicurean." The book is to my mind the most charming, and in a way, consolatory, of any latterly written, precisely because it takes one back to those first years when the good and the beautiful seemed as the concave and the convex of all things. I read it in the earliest days of our Florentine spring. The banks were full of fennel tufts, of sage, marigolds, and all manner of herbs that leave an aromatic, spring-like scent upon one's hands; between the leafless vines the paths were powdered with daisies; on the hillsides the peach and almond blossoms made a pinkish, whitish mist upon the silvery olives, the coppery sere oaks; and everywhere in the sprouting bright green wheat, flamed the scarlet and purple anemones, the light playing with

them as with gems. The pale blue sky was washed by recent showers; the air of delicate cold crispness. With these impressions from without mingled the impressions of the book: sunny, serene, bracing, like those first spring days, with its background of the Latin country life of Virgil and Tibullus; its principal figure, harmonious and strong and chaste like the statue of some high-born boy priest; its story of the search after Beauty and Good, the Lehrjahre of an antique Wilhelm Meister; but a Wilhelm Meister simpler, purer, more dignified than the hero of Goethe. The book brought back to me, more vividly than the sunshine and daisies and scent of crushed herbs, the sense of a moral and intellectual spring; the poignant remembrance of long ago, when at eighteen or nineteen I too had read those descriptions of rustic life and rites, austere and serene, in Virgil and Tibullus; when I too had looked upon the world as a tract of spring-

tide country, through which one might wander, calm and wise, like an antique statue, in search of the great dualism: the Good and the Beautiful. The Good? One feels, at that age, that one has got it; for who can connect anything save good with beautiful form, when it is temperate, harmonious, perfect; with sensations and emotions and thoughts so utterly simple, single-hearted, and detached from all things practical? The world is beautiful, or we see only its beauty; we feel, therefore, happy; and in feeling happy (being consciously harmless), we feel also good. It is the morality of all antique art and philosophy, of the teachings of Goethe and of Plato, of every blossoming fruit tree and sprouting blade of grass; and it is the morality of the youth of such of us as are best.

Unfortunately, it is delusive, and when we come to read "Marius" a second time we feel a certain sadness, of which this book is the seemingly serene result.

Little by little we begin to perceive that there are ugly things in the world: apathy, selfishness, vice, want, and a terrible wicked logic that binds them together in thousands of vicious meshes. And perceiving the ugly things in the world, we perceive for the first time, perhaps, the ugly things within ourselves: for of each there is somewhat in each of us. Then comes the moment of choice: we have learned, or guessed, that in continuing to live only for and with the beautiful serenities of art, we are passively abetting, leaving unfought, untouched, the dreadful, messy, irritating, loathsomenesses of life; and, on the contrary, in trying to tackle even the smallest of these manifold evils, we are bringing into our existence ugliness and unrest. Gradually, in short, we discover that to be good means, unluckily, to deal with evil; to be, I will not say beautiful, but clean and moderately healthy, spiritually, means to see much that is ugly and foul. Of course

we may still go and live with the daisies and the statues, seeing only them with the eyes of body and soul; unfortunately to live with the daisies and statues means no longer to be like unto them, but like rather to the dust-heap and the scarecrow, not much more beautiful in soul, certainly.

We were happier first. Decidedly; that is what I have been insisting all along. But while we were happy other folk were wretched; and this convenient division of property and class cannot be kept up for good. I know not whether the old saints were judicious in stripping off their good clothes, amply sufficient for themselves, that beggars might have them, each rather less than he needed; nor whether the Socialists of to-day would be wise in dealing similarly with their own (or other folks') worldly possessions. But this seems certain: in order that the great mass of mankind, which has neither peace nor dignity, nor beauty of life, should obtain

a small allowance of any such qualities, it becomes necessary that we, who happen to possess thereof, should deprive ourselves of a portion for their benefit.

Hence there comes a time, to such of us as shall not remain eternally children, when, by the side of all questions artistic, there must arise other questions, less pleasant to contemplate, and less easy, alas, to solve, nay, seemingly, almost insoluble. And together with this there comes also the knowledge that such things as have hitherto absorbed our attention are "Juvenilia." How such questions arise? In a hundred ways; and less perhaps from our additional experience of the world than from a greater maturity within ourselves; for external matters would not affect us were it not for a certain change in us. Mere visible objects become something more than mere visible objects; and individual cases begin to pain us with the force of great class evils.

This, my dear Carlo, you are beginning to feel, and more so, I think, quite of late. You have just been in England, and England shows its evils grimly, as much as Italy, unconsciously, thanks to climate, beauty, and a certain dignified stagnation, hides them. Moreover, while Italy makes one think of the past; England, inevitably, leads one to speculate upon the future: each country is a key to what is not yet, or no longer, mere present. Among the various sights, I don't know whether you saw, along with theatres and slums, and political meetings, and æsthetic houses, what to me must always seem one of the most impressive of all spectacles, short of hell—the Tyne at Newcastle. Impressive spiritually as well as physically. A vast mass of leaden water, polluted with every foulness, flowing heavily, or scarce seeming to flow at all, between lines of docks and factories, their innumerable masts and innumerable chimneys faint upon the thick brown sky, faintly reddened

with an invisible sun, and streaked in various intensities of brown and grey and black, with ever rising curls of smoke. This river flows, most often as deep as in a gorge, between banks of blackish cinders, of white poisonous chemical refuse, or worst of all, of what was once pure live soil, now stained and deadened into something unnatural, whereon the very weeds refuse to grow. Down these banks trickle, from black blast furnaces, and rotting greenish docks, and white leprous chemical works, crumbling with caries, foul little streams, vague nameless oozes, choking with their blackness, staining with their deadly purple and copper-colour and green and white; while the air is thick with the smoke as of brickkilns, with the hospital whiffs of chlorine. And against this sky rise the masts and riggings, and funnels and chimneys and cranes, the long line of crumbling reddish roofs and black sheds, to where the great river, thickening and thickening in the greyness, a great river

of hell, winding in huge folds, spreads itself out at Jarrow into a grey and sullen lagoon, marked with serpentine posts, and ribbed with rafts, a Stygian lake, among the dim lines of chimneys and rigging. But sadder even where, up at Newcastle, things seem less bad: sadder where there rises sheer from the water a mound of vivid green crowned by a black church, greenness of an abandoned churchyard; making the grey of the water, the blackness of the houses and soil but the greyer and blacker, the violation of all natural things more keenly felt, with the suggestion, that but a few miles off are the brownish moors and pale green fells. And in this spot also, as if to remind us that, as there are still in the world green places, so there is also in the world's history a period when other things were held more important than the plating of ironclads, the ribs of ships, coal, coke, and magnesia, there rises above the polluted river, into the smoke suffused with sun redness, the

delicate outline of a mediæval church tower.

There are men who live among all this by the thousand, and they are far from being the worst off in the world; men like those who crowded the Tyne steamer returning home after their day's work; black, red-faced, and blistered, or with flesh in pale creases under the grime, their clothes engrained with dirt, shiny with grease, often tattered, the filthy wisp of comforter round their necks; men who sat silent and morose, scarcely exchanging a word, and who are yet human beings, intelligent and sensitive, who get treatises on political economy from the free library, in order to see why things should be so very queer and uncomfortable down here. There are other men also, not living on the Tyne, and women also, clean, well-dressed, appreciative of art and music and literature, with whom we can sympathize vastly about Wagner, and Swinburne, and Whistler,

and Venetian sunsets; for whom, in short, we write our books, sing our songs, or paint our pictures, as the case may be; men and women, of whose souls we occasionally get a glimpse, a glimpse that shows that polluted as are the waters of the Tyne, and black as are its smoke-clouds, and noisome and sterilizing its fumes and trickles of refuse, there are things more polluted and blacker still, and more noisome and sterilizing.

These things are beginning to strike you; and, therefore, you complain, you no longer feel quite so happy as formerly; no longer so certain what to think and to care for. Therefore you, also, are beginning to have a class of interests which might be called "Juvenilia."

"Juvenilia!"—Well, why not? And why not be contented with them? Have we a recipe to cure all evils? Can we clean out the Tyne, or clean our neighbours' souls? And if not, why talk or think about either; when there are things

which are clean, pleasant, and which require only that we should enjoy them: art, music, poetry, beautiful nature, delightful people? If such things are "Juvenilia," were it not better to cast in our lot with them, and say boldly, I choose to remain young?

Not so. For do what we will, devote ourselves exclusively to the pleasant and certain things of this life, shut our eyes and ears resolutely to the unpleasant and uncertain; we shall be made, none the less, to take part in the movement that alters the world. Help it to alter we must, in so far as each of us represents a class, a nationality, a tendency, nay, as each of us eats a certain amount of food and occupies a certain amount of standing-room. For the whole of all things is ever moving, changing plan and form; and we, its infinitesimal atoms, are determining its movements. The question therefore is, in which direction shall our grain of dust's weight be thrown?

This is what we require to know. Do not let us swell with self-importance. It is not a question of our leading any one—you or I, or Tom, Dick, or Harry. The number of the world's leaders is small, and perhaps the world's leaders are necessarily irresponsible, biassed, blind, mere forces. It is a question of being led; and in which direction; of being led towards good or towards evil, in darkness or in light; for follow, in one way or another, with some result, of more or less comfort or misery to some one, we needs all must. Therefore, it behoves us to know what the world is; what we ourselves are; above all, what we think, and why we think it.

And therefore also, my dear Carlo, we must look at many things that are not beautiful; we must bring home to our feelings many things that are not good; we must think out many matters that are bitter and uncertain; we must recognize that we are no longer children, and that

we have other interests besides those which I have called "Juvenilia."

The feeling comes home to one often and oftener; and in less and less expected ways. It saddens, in a certain sense, and makes the world less pleasant, and one's companionships less satisfactory. But, on the other hand, it gives to the world a meaning which it never had before, this seeing it no longer as a mere storehouse of beautiful inanimate things, but as a great living mass, travailing and suffering in its onward path; and it makes one feel less isolated, in a way, to recognize all round, among creatures of different habits and views from one's own, and profoundly unconscious of one's existence, the companionship of the desire for good. Last autumn, just before that glimpse of the Tyne, I was wandering about with some friends about the foot of Cross Fell, when we came, in a tiny hamlet, upon a company of Methodist preachers. The

cluster of black cottages, with the brownish green slopes, scarcely purpled with heather, stretching away, roll after roll, without a tree or a bush for landmark, gave me a sense of remoteness greater than anything I have ever felt before; the very roads seemed to lead nowhere, and the paths to wind on, from hill-top to hill-top, with always the same clouds to face them and nothing else. In the middle of the village green, that is, of the bit of grass round the pump, with the big brownish moorland, ribbed with black walls, rising behind, a dozen people, the total of the inhabitants, were gathered round a youngish man, in a long black coat, with a wide white face, who was bellowing out the necessity of following the call of God, of coming to the light. I fear the poor man would not have thought me a very satisfactory listener; and I certainly should not have considered his views decisive as to the nature of God and of God's light. But

I felt that, in a certain way, we sympathized, he and I; and that there was a closer link between us, without two ideas or tasks in common, than between myself and so many of my friends, whose pictures I look at, whose songs I listen to, and who are so polite as to read and praise my books.

Yes, certainly; for I could have told that Methodist preacher, and he would have understood me, though he had never perhaps seen an antique, nor heard an opera, nor read a novel, what I have wished to explain to you, my dear Carlo, that there are in life "Juvenilia," but there are other things also.

# THE LAKE OF CHARLEMAGNE.

## AN APOLOGY OF ASSOCIATION.



# THE LAKE OF CHARLEMAGNE.

## AN APOLOGY OF ASSOCIATION.

A SENSE of indecision and self-contradiction has been worrying me of late. A suspicion has come to me, in moments of weariness and depression (as such suspicions always do come), that I might be getting entangled in exaggerated, unjust notions; that I might, so to speak, be selling my soul to the most cunning of all fiends, the Demon of Theory. This demon is much more subtle and dangerous than those of his brethren who, once upon a time, haggled souls out of unlucky alchemists and architects in exchange for books of spells and plans of cathedrals. He does not frighten you with his horns and fumes

of brimstone, nor make you think twice by exacting signatures with your own blood, and similar alarming legal proceedings. He merely leaves carelessly about the object of your desire, the explanation which will spare you all further fatigue and labour, which will save you from the torment of self-doubt, from the humiliation of self-contradiction as rapidly as will a banker's letter and a cheque book save the penniless wretch from the torment and humiliation of bankruptcy. He himself, I mean this demon, keeps studiously out of the way. You find the unexpected thing which solves all your difficulties, puts an end to all your worries; and in all probability you hasten to pick it up, thanking your good fortune, and wondering at your stupidity in not having noticed before this invaluable piece of property. The demon, who sees all that is going on, laughs in his sleeve. The mouse has walked into the trap. For, strange as it may appear, from

the moment of your pocketing that explanation thus cunningly thrown in your way, you are, to an ever-increasing extent, and for a daily-increasing number of years, the property of that Theory Demon; his serf, whom he can drive to the right or the left, whom he can pinch and prick and pull about to his heart's content; whom he can order either to rob, or murder, or stand indecorously head on the ground, heels in the air; upon whose back he can ride (as other demons ride on witches) to the very Brocken orgy of insanity and falsehood. Mind, I am speaking but too seriously. Let once our vanity or laziness tempt us into neglecting the doubts, the suspicious little facts, which would require a careful and cruel revision of our ideas, which might entail the labour of seeking some new explanation for a thing already explained, the humiliation of an admission that all had been a mistake; let us but give way to this temptation, and we shall

find ourselves, little by little, surrounded by new doubts which must again be quashed; by new facts which must again be set aside; by new injustices which we must commit; by new lies which we must tell, unless we wish the whole edifice of our ideas to crash publicly to the ground; in order to be consistent we shall have become habitual liars; in order not to appear liars, we shall soon appear, what we shall be, fools. Oh, not to slip into the bondage of the Theory Demon, to remain free, and able to be, at least as often as our wits will permit, the scatterer of mere truth, not the kneader up together of a little sense in a great deal of rubbish! The fear of possession by the fiend has always been a disagreeable matter. The poor monks, we know, saw fiends in everything, and scarcely durst blow their nose or wash their hands lest Beelzebub or Mephistopheles might lurk in the handkerchief or in the soap and water. And

similarly with the Demon Theory. If once you have reason to suspect that he is laying traps for you, you are for ever beset by doubts and discouragements. You scarcely venture to handle an idea; you tremble at every liking or disliking, lest it be a prejudice, that demon's invention; and ever and anon you awake with a start of terror, and catching up the explanation of things at which you have been working for months, you rudely pull it to pieces, till no shape is left, and only a heap of disorderly facts remains. Such is your condition if once the suspicion enters your mind that there is danger from the Theory Demon; and such, to some extent, has been my state of mind ever since it occurred to me that the Theory Demon was going to snare me with the subject of association, if, indeed, he had not trapped me already; at which thought my mind shakes and jerks to rid itself of possible meshes.

The matter of Association is simply as follows. I have always felt and expressed that in all our relations with art, association—that is to say, the faculty by which the real presence of one object evokes the imaginary presence of other objects—is a most dangerous and pestilent faculty, leading to insincerity, injustice, and stupid wastefulness, by making us think of things suggested by a work of art instead of attending to the work of art itself. This I have thought and said, and indeed, at the moment of stating my position once more, it seems to me that I was perfectly right. But now comes the mischief. Little by little, watching my own thoughts, my own living, moving, yet unstated thoughts, it appears to me that this very faculty of association is being highly honoured in my mind; that, in a sort of quiet, half-perceptible way, those thoughts of mine are attributing a great deal of good to it; indeed, are making for it

quite a fine position. The question is, Which is the snare laid for me by the Theory Demon—the opinion that association is a pestilent thing, or the opinion that it is excellent, useful, and most honourable? Is the Theory Demon cozening me, or trying to make justice appear to lie in relentless severity towards association, or perhaps more subtly by causing my very fear of injustice to betray me into unwarranted recantation? This is what has been worrying me for a long while, until a circumstance, which has only just taken place, and which brings home to me the wonderful power of this faculty of association (legitimate or illegitimate) in our æsthetic life, has determined me to settle the question by a sort of Oriental or Mediæval proceeding; which is, after having spoken ill of association, and while not really rescinding one word that I said, to write an apology containing all the good things about asso-

ciation of which I can possibly think. In this way, whichever side justice lies, I shall be safe not to miss it.

A week or so ago I was going up the Rhine from Coblentz to Bingen, sitting, not at all enraptured, on the steamboat. I was neither surprised nor vexed at experiencing none of the delight which our fathers and mothers experienced on their first sight of Rhineland; I was not disappointed, because I was perfectly prepared for disappointment. I had clearly realized beforehand how completely the Rhine, with respect to its emotional and imaginative power, is a thing of the past. The imaginative and emotional, the æsthetic habits and wants of people have undergone a great change since the days when the Rhineland was the holy land of romanticism. The mass of mankind scarcely knows what will or what will not give it æsthetic pleasure; it requires specially endowed men, painters and poets, to select and copy bits

of reality; so that having seen and been made to appreciate the picture, it may recognize, appreciate, and, if possible, extend its knowledge of the original. Now the Rhine, harsh as it sounds, is not the sort of thing singled out and copied by the artists of to-day, painters or poets. Our painters do not care for the ostentatious, self-conscious picturesqueness of rocks and river and ruins; they are seeking for the beauty, the wonder of commonplace scenes, they are striving after the tints, the sheen—nay, the very darkness with which nature enrobes most regally the veriest plebeian of a landscape. The poets, on the other hand (or perhaps I should have said the poet Browning, the great showman-in-chief of our imaginative puppet-show), the poets no longer care for ready-made and extremely made-up heroism and romance; for knightly perfection draped in anachronism, and satanic grandeur draped in mystery. What interests them (and I am

speaking not of those who merely paint exquisite unreal decorations of antique or mediæval fashion, but of those who can really react on our lives and tastes) is reality, of past or present; historical knowledge has made them hungry of the realities of former days, of the every-day life of beauty and sordidness, of the rotten heroism and fiendishness and water. In all modern art, the effects which shall move and delight us, the beautiful and the pathetic, are being sought every day more and more by realistic means; and I, for my part, feel that herein our artistic feeling has got on to a far worthier road than in the days of romantic poetry and painting. But, be this as it may, one point is certain, which is that the Rhineland has been gradually pushed out of our own æsthetic and emotional life, and been quietly put by in the lumber-room of superannuated romanticism. These points, explaining why the Rhine should give me but little plea-

sure, I kept revolving in my mind; and, as I sat on the steamer between Coblentz and Bingen, involuntarily conjuring up other scenes, other rocks, rivers, and old towns, comparing, deciding, and seeking to understand my own decisions, the sense became stronger and stronger in my mind, as the water foamed round the paddles and fell in ridges behind the ploughing keel, and the awning flapped in the draught, that for my own part I would willingly give all this romantic Rhineland, rocks, castles, nixes, robber knights, and all, for a reach, pale under the pale blue sky, of poplared and shingled Tuscan river, for a sluggish bend of English stream, flowing you scarce can tell which way, under the willows, beneath the sedge and meadow-sweet, through the low-lying pastures.

But while such were my reasoned ideas, I gradually became aware of the presence within me of something different, diffusing

itself, and permeating my consciousness. Not exactly an idea, nor yet a set of impressions, something impossible to define, because definition is not made for vagueness; first within myself, warming me like a cordial into vague pleasure, then afterwards surrounding me from outside, an all-encompassing medium in which the soul floated with languid enjoyment—pleasurableness slowly produced (as heat is slowly given out by a few embers when we blow upon them) by the sense that this was the Rhineland. The Rhineland, but not the Rhineland as a concrete reality, a sum total of present and actually perceived and analyzed impressions and ideas; not the Rhineland which was now before me, which I was now criticizing, of which at this selfsame moment I was still duly reiterating to myself that it was a thing of former days, no longer in harmony with the imaginative requirements, etc., etc., and the various other subtle remarks which you have read above.

Not this Rhineland; quite another. A Rhineland of the past, but which neither I nor any other mortal had ever seen; one which used only to exist in my childish fancy, and which, wholly different from the reality, was gradually brought back to my memory by names which I had for years forgotten. A Fata Morgana Rhineland, which years and years ago I had constructed —or rather, which had constructed itself for me—from the random allusions, the incoherent descriptions of a servant-maid we had had while living in the neighbourhood of Frankfurt. I must have been a small creature of five or six; she was a buxom thing of eighteen or nineteen, romantic, poetic, and of decayed gentility, as nurse-maids in Germany frequently are, or were; a native of the Rhineland, Rheingau as she called it, meaning thereby merely that classic portion between Bingen and Coblentz; all the rest of the river's course, before and after, being apparently non-

existent for her, as it certainly was for me. Of this Rhineland of hers she was perpetually telling, and to me she could never tell enough. She was not from the river bank itself, but from Inland, some small place whose name has completely gone out of my memory; there her father was schoolmaster, her grandfather had been parson; it was the most marvellous region in the whole world; it never appeared to me as having anything in common with the rest of the earth. Everything was wonderful. Fruit trees, the like of which did not exist, covered it with miraculous blossom. Now fruit blossom, the transparent, easily shed pure white of the cherry; the solid creaminess, crowned with tiny pale green leaves, of the pear; the pink-tipped, woolly, unwillingly opening buds of the apple, the various foam-like flowering of all the various kinds of plums, fruit blossom of all kinds always had, I know not whether from the difficulty of obtaining it, its association with sweet taste,

or with the excitement and surprise of spring, or merely from its own peculiar beauty, quite a particular fascination for my childhood. Embosomed in all this were all the other marvels of the girl's birthplace. The father, a schoolmaster such as there never was elsewhere; the parsonage, a parsonage such as there could not be more than one in the world; the parson himself, the grandfather, a grandfather as other folks never possessed one; who had been alive during the French Revolution (the French Revolution had a marvellous power over my imagination), who had seen, spoken to, flouted, repelled (who knows?) Napoleon when he came into Rhineland; an old gentleman whose wonderful wisdom was deeply impressed on my mind, one of his dicta—"The hair of the head, the ornament of mankind, let it hang, let it hang" ("Die Haare des Hauptes, die Zierde der Menschen, lass hängen, lass hängen") remaining in my memory like an oracle.

Moreover, this Rhineland, this particular Rhineland, was full of legends of nixens, castles, treasures, nuns and knights, things which all the world can (in all probability) read in the sixpenny books sold at the stations, but which appeared to me as learned in some occult and direct manner by my nurse, as the emanation of the wonderful country. Of these legends there was, moreover, a mysterious large volume, of which (without ever having set eyes upon it) I can see, brown binding, tapestry work markers and all, at this very moment, so often did I clamour for descriptions of it. It was apparently unique, at least it never seemed to occur to any one that a copy of it might be procured; vague hints were thrown out that some day it should be brought, I should see it and hear the stories read out of it, but it never was brought; having something inscrutable and mirage-like in its nature; and it remained, and still remains, a mysterious object in my imagi-

nation, a wizard book, which, when opened, lets out a cloud of diaphanous figures, knights, water sprites, nuns, enchanted princesses, even as other old books, when clapped open, emit dust from out of their pages. Round this existed the parsonage, moved the father, the grandfather, uncles and cousins, all unique people, in a kind of sea of everlasting fruit blossom. Such was the Rhineland as it existed for me: the land of wonders and joys, too wonderful indeed for approach; the idea never as much as occurring to me to wish, in my wildest wishes, even to penetrate into it. Not a province, not a substantial country, to which you could get by two hours' railway travelling, but a land east of the sun and west of the moon—inexplicable, unapproachable, a thing to sit and wonder on.

All this, long, long, forgotten, gradually returned to my memory with the name (magic names, alas! how long forgotten) of Lorch, Kaub, Rhense, Bacherach, and other

villages by the great stream; and, while my eyes were staring at the monotonous zigzag of dwarfed vines and stone walls up and down the hillsides, with the battered little castle here and there; at the white towns with gabled houses and extinguisher steeples spread out primly at the water's edge; at the little oasis of brilliant green grass, fruit trees, hedges breaking the weariness of the eternal vineyard; at the solemn grey-green water, on which the huge rafts went in and out like floating spars; as the logical certainty of the insufficiency of all these sights and associations for us familiar with Italy, admirers of Whistler and readers of "My Last Duchess," came clearer and clearer before what ought to be called, I suppose, the more intelligent portion of my mind; the rest of my mind, nay, somehow my whole nature, was invaded by the consciousness of that imaginary Rhineland of my childhood. I felt excited, pleased, scarce knowing at what; and whenever the boats came along-

side the steamer and the cry arose "Boppard," or "Kaub," or "Lorch," the effect was as if I caught distant notes of some once cherished tune, thrilling me faintly, but surely.

Very pleasant, I grant it; but, after all, pleasant things are not necessarily good or proper: to be excessively conceited is pleasant; and pleasant also, doubtless, to have an opium vision of bliss; or to think that a certain number of genuflexions, a certain number of Latin rhymes will gain us admittance to a paradise whose sky is molten gold, and whose every flower is a living jewel; but in all these cases the pleasantness to the individual between whom and the truth such figments interfere, does not diminish by a tittle the moral and intellectual degradation attendant on such hallucinations; and the visions conjured up by our faculty of association are but another form of such hallucinations, and have their attendant degradation. Degradation,

moral and intellectual, you will answer, in moral and intellectual matters; but, after all, what great mischief has arisen if association have its way in artistic matters; if an unreality of the fancy come between us and what are, at best, but the unrealities of art? But I say that degradation it is. The kingdom of beauty is, it is true, only the playground of our lives; but, even as children may soil their frocks, or hurt their playmates, or tread down grass and flowers in the course of their games; so we also may not only trample into unseemliness our æsthetic playground and shatter our æsthetic toys, but also, during our pastimes, become guilty of injury to our neighbours' rights; of destruction of our moral garments; of various things which, when on returning to our serious work and serious lessons, on seeing our playthings in bits, our playmates bruised and battered, our playground devastated, and ourselves tattered and besmirched, may make us feel exceedingly

ashamed. Now, of all tricks which we grown-up folk may play in our æsthetic playground, there are few as mischievous as that trick of association: none certainly affording such opportunities for maltreatment of others, vandalism, and wastefulness. Let us look into the matter. Association means the investing of one object, having characteristics of its own, with the characteristics of some other object: the pushing aside, in short, of reality to make room for the fictions of imagination or memory.

Now, in a work of art, or a thing of nature which can afford artistic pleasure, there is, as in man, woman, beast, plant, or stone, nothing so important as its reality. This reality, this sum total of all its actually existing characteristics, means, in the work of art, all the labour expended upon producing it, all the good luck enjoyed in finding it, all the pleasure that it may give. In practical concerns, this is recognized by every creature: we do our

best to get at the reality of man, woman, beast, or plant, knowing that on that reality depends all it can do for us, or that we must do for it. But in all æsthetical matters the case is different: We do not seek for the reality of the work of art, do not ask ourselves what it is. The reality of a work of art is that by which we recognize and remember, that of which we can make a copy, the identical and individual, which to all men similarly constituted must appear the same: the form, this form, the visible shape of picture or statue, the audible shape of symphony or song; what the artist has conceived, has seen or heard in his mind, which he has perfected in the mere conception, and then laboured to transmit outwardly to us by arranging the paint on the canvas, the bosses in the marble, the relations of the sounds of voice and instruments.

But little knowledge of music is required to realize the work of composing a sym-

phony or a mass: inventing the themes, dovetailing them into each other, distributing them in little bits to the various instruments or voices, and giving to the other instruments and voices something which shall enhance and not impoverish the effect of those main parts. And when the artist has all the science and taste and experience required for all this, when he can drive (without lurching) the frightful twenty-in-hand of counterpoint and orchestration, he yet requires, for his work to be good, a thing considerably rarer than rubies, and, unfortunately, not obtainable for money —the trifle called genius. In the same way, it is good to meditate upon the fact, casually mentioned to me one day by a sculptor friend that a statue intended to be placed, not in a niche, but on a free-standing pedestal, would afford, if every point giving a new relation of points were represented, from twenty to twenty-five possible and different photographs. This simply means

that the sculptor must make a statue which shall present well in twenty or twenty-five ways; after which there remains the perfecting of all this in a minute detail. You may sometimes go to the studio and see the clay model finished, ready for casting; return a week later, and you may, just as soon as not, find the model still there, with perhaps a whole leg and one half of the drapery reduced to an unseemly lump of greenish clay, which the artist is slowly working back into shape, having suddenly grown discontented with such and such a fold of drapery, because, although admirable when looked at in front, it made some trifling lump or point which looked bad at the side. Such is the reality of a good symphony or a good statue; and such is the labour which even genius cannot dispense with in its production. This is the reality, and this is what association immediately proceeds to mar.

The symphony is being performed; and

as, bit by bit, is unfolded that complicated pattern of sounds; as passage follows passage, whose invention may have been a flash of genius, whose arrangement an agony of long unsuccessful effort, you (I mean mankind in general, presumably including myself) who are perhaps the mere unproductive æsthete, sit blandly, a pleasant noise of music soothing or gently stirring your nerves, letting your mind fill (like a leaky boat) with vague thoughts and emotions. The sough of wind among pines, the smell of the forest; the sheen of the sunset on the sea; your dead or distant friends; the soul, its peregrinations through infinity, love, and death (after Burne Jones or Solomon) leading or snaring it, on the way—whither? to the paradise of Fra Angelico, the pink and blue Jerusalem, shimmering among the gilded meadows,—or rather to the whirlpool of atoms, the viewless seas and skies of Nirvâna. Meanwhile things have been going by: happy

movements and combinations; things gone in a second, but, remembering which in moments of disheartenment, the poor composer may have smiled, and the smile may have meant: "There is genius in me after all." These things have gone by: past your mind, your pampered soul, noticed about as much as the long cricket notes through a summer evening's talk; the crackling of the fire during the composition of your last poem—a poem, I would wager, upon the power of music.

Similarly with the statue, one glance, just taking in the general aspect, perhaps another to see how well the stone is cut; and then you contemplate the work with that vague stare which sees nothing; you think of the hero's life, and of his mighty battle-shout, of his tears over his fallen comrade. Of the waves on the Trojan shore, the clear night over the plain dotted with watch-fires; the youth of mankind — Socrates, Sappho, the brutal Roman prætors, and

a whole Panathenaic procession of impertinent associations. Meanwhile the marble stands before you, neither fighting, nor shouting, nor weeping; with no waves or watch-fires near him, and no consciousness of the youth of mankind; a mere comely, naked body, with a wisp of drapery over the arm, and no personality save in the name graven on the pedestal, a name snatched at on its first suggestion by the friend whom the sculptor has asked, "Now, what is this to be called?" Thus poor in sentimental or psychological qualities, but rich with a hundred beauties of line and curve and boss; of light expanded here, and imprisoned and fretted there; of chisel grainings, delicate like sea sand; of bold point-strokes, vigorously marking off bone or sinew; things, all these, which make up the complete reality of the work; things over which the artist may have half broken his heart; and with the vaguest general impression of which you depart, persuaded

that you alone have appreciated the statue, and ready to write (as Winckelmann, who, however, really saw the good points of a statue, used to do) that this masterpiece is altogether moulded out of the most subtle abstract ideas, is, in short, the perfect embodiment of the shapeless.

And this, all this has been the doing of association; a rare and beautiful thing has been within our spiritual reach, and we have not cared to stretch out to grasp it. The genius and patience, the labour of months, nay, rather of years, of all the previous years of the artist and of those from whom he learned, expended to give us an exquisite and exotic pleasure; all this has been wasted, wasted as stupidly and ungratefully as would be wasted the precious fruit brought with infinite care from other climates, of which some captious child might say, after a bite, "Thank you, I prefer the unripe apples I can pick up in the orchard."

What has become of my desire for justice, of my plans of dealing equitably by saying all the good I could think of, while thinking all the ill that could be thought of this abominable faculty of association? I had determined to write an apology, nay, a panegyric, and, instead, I have written a diatribe; the mere name of association has made me acrimonious; acrimonious, but, you cannot deny it, just; because this association really is . . .

Well, yes; that is just the tantalizing thing about association: the more I examine into its workings, the more malignant it appears. And yet, when I am not trying to reason it out, to do justice all round, a great number of things do come into my head illustrative of the beneficial effect; yes, indeed, the beneficial effect, I may even (strange as it may sound) go to the length of saying, the absolutely indispensable character of this faculty of association in our æsthetic perceptions. You

think this an absurdity? You think association can be but detrimental in our relations to art? Well (how idiotic one's own arguments do sound when some one else is using them against one, to be sure!) I am of opinion that without association there would be no relations to art; nay, no art at all. You smile? You say (what I somehow said myself, and now I can't make it square any longer) that as the action of opposition is that of a wave, an allusion of all manner of chaotic thoughts and impressions washing over the definite artistic forms which are settling in our mind; it is evident that the definite artistic forms run the risk of being completely obliterated. That seems to you conclusive: good; that is the very reason why the action of opposition is indispensable to the appreciation, nay, to the creation of artistic form. You have compared the action of association to that of a wave carrying innumerable heterogeneous odds and ends

of thought and impression. As such, in my turn, I claim it as the action which is for ever making the firm soil of our mind; by collecting round the microscopic present all the floatsam of the past, the action which is perpetually preventing the sea of constantly undulating experiences, atoms of sensation and reflection for ever changing place like the drops in the ocean, from reabsorbing everything which might become a permanently existing idea, a definite emotion, a solid form. The floatsam, the bits of triturated imagery and feeling (already soaked and battered into something unlike their original nature) may be brought in too great abundance; and the wave may carry too much of that strange sea froth of sentiment, a thing neither solid nor fluid, and which fast imprisons and dooms to never-ending floating and tossing everything that it once encloses; and thus a something, perhaps rare and precious, may go for ever churned

about among the floatsam and the sea froth, until, rotting, it become mere sea froth itself. The wave of association may deprive us ever and anon of some addition to the little islet of wisdom and beauty of our lives; but had there not been that wave tossing the past to the present, no solid wisdom or beauty, nay, no individuality of ourselves would have existed at all. This is a metaphor; you object, and there is no nonsense so great as not to be made most judicious by metaphorical presentation. Then I will drop the metaphor, and speak the dry language of fact (so often making us lose those sudden revelations of analogy which flash upon us in metaphor). Without association, I say, no art. In the first instance, every modern psychologist who has studied the origin of our æsthetic faculties, will tell you that one half, and that in far more complex, of the instinctive preferences which are the rudiments of all our æsthetic feelings, is referable,

not like the simpler kind of such rudimentary instincts of beauty, to the greater physical comfort which the eye and ear experiences in the perception of certain relations of colour and sound; but to the habit, due to the experience of our remotest half-human progenitors, of associating material pleasure, safety, or usefulness with certain aspects rather than with others. Were we to seek the reasons why a strong and healthy human body of our own race gives us a general sense of beauty which we should not receive from a deformed negro, we should find that the single elements of line, curve, and tint were probably not, in the one case, more agreeable to our nerves of sight than in the other case; we should probably discover that the selfsame lines, curves, and tints were contained in a great number of other objects of which we should call some ugly and others beautiful; and that we must consequently seek the explanation of the

sense of beauty connected with the one figure, and of ugliness connected with the other, in the practical generalization made thousands of years ago, that a body formed in one way was useful and agreeable, and formed in another way useless and cumbersome; in the contempt, moreover, and the suspicious loathing with which savages of a slightly superior race would look upon other savages of a slightly inferior race, their slaves or enemies. The original motive of preference has been obliterated by centuries; just as for years we may forget the original circumstance which directed us to the occupation or friendship which has been the all in all of our lives; but the result of the act of association which took place in ancestors living perhaps before what we call Europe was turned into ice fields; the instinct of preference, the habit of pleasure, have become part and parcel of our nature. Thus, you see, there would never have been any

works of art or any people to appreciate them; nay, there would not have been such faculties as perceive and create the beautiful, had it not been for this same much abused faculty of association. Why did our apelike progenitors enjoy the appearance of a green tree with white blossoms which did not bear eatable fruit, because they remembered the greenness of leaf and whiteness of blossom of a tree which did bear eatable fruit? Why did they not limit their likings to the real, but go loving one thing for the sake of another; the present for the sake of the past? They were sentimental and quite deficient in intellectual discipline. But, alas! had they been less maundering and more logical we should have had no Raphael, no Michael Angelo; we should care to see only the things we can eat. All that, you answer, is perfectly true; but that happened a long time ago; that association was useful in our remotest ancestors

is not a reason that it should be desirable in us. After all, men and women, in early times, lived in caves and on posts in lakes; and had they refused to do so, the human race would have come to an end, and we should not be here to live in houses. But is that a reason why we also should go and live in caves or on posts in a lake? Thus you, chafing my spirit more and more by repeating arguments which are my own, and which I detest proportionately.

I continue.

But as there are cave and lake homes which our ancestors did well to inhabit, and there are also houses which it is fit we should live in, so also are there modes of association which were useful in our ancestors; and different, much more modern modes of association which it would be as fatal for us to regret, as for us to be too grand to live under roofs, and insist upon establishing ourselves on floating cirrus clouds. I have

compared the action of association to that of the wave which brings to the nucleus of solid earth all the floating things which can make soil. Now, do you know what makes our mind, our experience, our genius?

Do you think that we perceive, much less remember, the totally unknown? Not a bit of it; we merely constantly recognize the already familiar; what we catch hold of with our mind is not that which is new, which belongs to to-day; but that which is old, and belongs to yesterday: the different, the new, we take in, tolerate, enjoy, only later. We wander, as it were, through a vast and populous city; those that we notice and speak to are our old acquaintance; but the old acquaintance introduce new ones, whom we admit for their sake. Nay, if we sometimes look twice upon the face of a stranger, if we accost a man of whom we have no knowledge, it is because in the face, the gait, the manner of that

stranger, we have recognized something of the face, the gait, and the manner of some one we have known before; and if, later, we come to love the new friend for qualities in which he differs wholly from the old one, we must not forget that we cared for him at first merely for the things by which he reminded us of that other.

Thus does association gather the past to the present, assimilating for ever new impressions to old ones. Within the mind of all men for whom or through whom the beautiful exists, there has thus come to exist a perpetual coming and going, submerging and rising to the surface of fragments of thought, and feeling, and perception; a chaotic whirl of atoms, of broken-down fragments of works of art, of shreds dyed with some strange sky or wave tint of nature, of mere imperfect silhouettes, and of most heterogeneous dabs of colour; moreover, faces and voices of persons, branches of trees, bars of melody, snatches

of verse, little shreds of mysterious and momentary feelings, of love and hate and hopefulness and sorrow: a perfect witches' caldron full, and seething like a witch broth, each atom seeking the atoms most akin to itself, uniting with them, but usually to be swept back again into the common whirl. Every now and then a curious phenomenon takes place. Whether from the accident of a greater than usual homogeneousness in these seething atoms, or from the accident of some unusually great heat or pressure exercised upon them, or from any other similar cause that you can think of, there arise in this chaos agglomerations which are no longer chaotic; there appear in this constant change things which are stable, mere bubbles at first, but gaining solidity and definiteness every moment; until at length they can actually be removed out of the heterogeneous and never-resting whirl, and be known not merely by him in whose brain they have arisen, but by others also.

And these things, arisen out of the chaos of elements brought together by association, nay, separated from that seething mass, and united with other separating fragments by the power of that very association again, these things are what we call forms: pictures, symphonies, works of art. And there is no stranger thought than that of the great unused, disorderly mass of sights, sounds, feelings, and thoughts, whose existence is proved by the production of certain definite works, and which every artist has carried with him, unused, into his grave. Oh, for a glimpse into that splendid and inestimable chaos out of which have issued the works of Shelley, of Mozart, of Raphael; for a glimpse into the crepuscular places where thronged the dim shapes from among whom Michael Angelo called forth his sullen goddesses and prophets; into the unsubstantial, fluctuating crowd whence Shakespeare evoked Miranda, and Portia, and Romeo, and Lear; or into those untrodden

and intangible woods and dells whence Keats bade Endymion guide his chariot.

Empty and impossible desires; yet not so empty, not so cruelly impossible as the desire, the longing of those in whose mind things of beauty and dignity are for ever turning, are for ever seeming to unite and take shape, merely to fall asunder, and be absorbed once more into chaos.

Thus much for the part played by association in the actual production of beautiful things. Let us see now what is its share in the enjoyment of them. How great this is I realized, perhaps fully, only this summer; realized it not only by a mere filling up of an empty present by a rich past, as in the case of the Rhineland experience which I have told you of; but by suddenly feeling the vivid present accompanied, like some clear melody, by the fainter but fuller harmonies of the past. I had just returned to England, and was walking one morning across one of our south country commons,

all mottled yellowish with tender-sprouting bracken, and rusty, inky green with gorse, and all a-chirrup with young larks. It was of all things the most opposed to the hills, misty grey with olive, the fields all a yellow shimmer of pale green vines and wheat, the diaphanous tints, the sharp but unsubstantial forms of Tuscany, whence I had just come; and it filled me with a sense like that of breathing suddenly a wholly different air, of moving in a different element, as those must feel who rise in a balloon, or dive down deep under water. Folds on folds of green undulation, strips of grass and common enclosed by round trees, and tightened, shrunk by distance, till the horizon is nothing but treetops upon treetops, monotonous in line, for ever the same shape, yet varied, painted by distance into a whole scale of various greens, from the brilliant pure green of the grass under foot, through all manner of yellowish tints and pale brown, of scarce mature or nipped

leaf, to the pure grey, nay, rather blue, of the horizon. There is about that country a great sense of dim and attractive distance, not, as in other places, of beautiful delectable mountains which our fancy vainly seeks to scale, but rather of a possibility, nay, a necessity, of our imagination going on for ever through that easily walked sweetness. Yet, under the grey sky, moister even in its little rifts of blue and its white vapours, moistest, perhaps, in its gleams of sun (which is colour, but not light), which are yellow from the blackness surrounding, this country is not without a certain dreariness and austerity, in the brown and rusty tones of the gorse, of the thinned trees, the blighted hedges, and of the seeded reed clumps; most of all in the damp chilliness of the air and sky. Walking across this common, I was struck by something which reminded me of Brittany, and immediately Brittany came before me —Brittany, with its resemblances and dif-

painful sense that their minds cannot take in new things sufficiently quickly. Now, if you question such people, you will almost invariably find that they have only confused and very general impressions about the galleries and countries which they have previously visited. They compare their brain to a thoroughly soaked sponge, which can absorb no more water. But their simile is false; they suffer not because there is too much past to admit the present, but because they have not enough of that many tinted though faded tapestry of the past, into which to weave, to secure them, the brilliant threads of the present.

These are the benefits which we obtain in our æsthetic life from association; nay, this constant adding of old to new is our æsthetic life itself. Sometimes even one might wish that this life were slower, that impressions were fewer and further between; that one might enjoy to the full the pleasure of going over one's odd impressions, of

noting the ever-changing and fantastic effects of this embroidery of new and old, of the dimmed thread of years and years ago, shot with the vivid purple or scarlet of yesterday. The fact is that our æsthetic life is too crowded or huddled; we have too many arts, too many schools of literature of all times and nations, and we properly enjoy (not even in the present impression, and certainly not in the past) none of them. We are like the inhabitants of certain remote villages in the south of Italy, who, until roads were made in the last century, were unable to export their products and unable also to consume them. We want all our casks and barrels for the new wine, the terrible new wine which seems to be made, not once a year, but once a month, nay, once a week; and we have to empty out into the gutters, like so much stale water, the mellow, the delicate vintage of previous years.

There now—I see you laughing. Laugh-

ing, I suppose, because after having found it so very, very difficult to say one good word for association, I have now made not only an apology, but a panegyric, and that the only drawback I can find is that we cannot so fully enjoy all the benefits of this pestilent faculty. Is that it? Well, I always told you that the very disagreeableness of my position arose from the sense that so much good as well as so much harm could be said of association, and that I wanted to state both. Besides, after all, is it of association itself that I have spoken ill; or is it not rather of the stupid wastefulness of those who indulge in it out of place? Association, I have said, makes art, makes our capacity of enjoying it; nay, makes our minds. Now are we not balking the very end and aim of association when, in order to enjoy its action in ourselves, we neglect its works? Is it not, whenever we let our thoughts wander in the presence of a picture or during the hearing of a symphony, as if

we were to refuse to let a poet read us his verses because we found his conversation so full of poetic charm? Yes, indeed, it is not association which is pestilent; it is our own conceit, our own stupidity, our own want of self-command.

Very self-contradictory. That is your verdict upon me; and it is useless, I suppose, to answer, "Where is the contradiction in saying that fire under some circumstances keeps us alive, and under certain others most effectually puts an end to us?" I have said too much harm to be permitted to say much good; that is always what this just world will not tolerate. Well, then, to be consistent, if possible, at least in the beginning and in the end of my remarks, I will mention a trick sometimes practised by association, and from which you perchance may have suffered, even as did the Emperor Charlemagne, whose melancholy tale is told by Petrarch in his epistles and elsewhere, but best of all by old Burton.

"He foolishly doted," we read in the second volume of the "Anatomy," "upon a woman of mean favour and condition, many years together; wholly delighting in her company, to the great grief and indignation of his friends and followers. When she was dead he did embrace her corpse as Apollo did the bay tree for his Daphne, and caused her coffin (richly embalmed and decked with jewels) to be carried about with him, over which he still lamented. At last a venerable bishop that followed his Court pray'd earnestly to God (commiserating his lord and master's case) to know the true cause of this mad passion, and whence it proceeded; it was revealed to him, in fine, that the cause of the emperor's mad love lay under the dead woman's tongue. The bishop went hastily to the carkas, and took a small ring thence; upon the removal, the emperor abhorred the corpse, and instead of it, fell furiously in love with the bishop; he would not

suffer him to be out of his presence. Which, when the bishop perceived, he flung the ring into the midst of a great lake, where the king then was. From that hour the emperor, neglecting all his other houses, built a fair house in the midst of the marsh, to his infinite expense, and a temple by it where after he was buried, and in which city all his prosperity ever since used to be crowned." Thus the legend of Aix la Chapelle; and to Petrarch, to Burton, to all our wonder-greedy forefathers, the tale seemed marvellous and eery. But, alas! are we not most of us in the same case as Burton's emperor? Have we not, many of us at least, some strange lake, which to others is a mere flat swampy pond, into which the charmed ring of association, taken from off some loved thing, has been, we know not why, cast? Even as the emperor did, so we also sit and stare into the shallow grey waters; and the moving cloud reflections seem to gather

into familiar shapes, and the reeds moaning and creeking as they sway, and the languid, sleepy water lapping dully as it eats into the green, crumbling, spungy ground, have accents which almost bring the tears into our eyes; and we look into the dim water and strain to see the bottom: for in the bottom of our marsh pond, our dreary pool, without trees, or bushy banks or reflected hills, our shallow sheet of water spilt on to the desolate plain, lies the charm, the ring, the potent mysterious something which we shall never see, but always long for. And the fault here belongs to association. But I must end, for I wished to conclude with a word more of the evil of this faculty; and unless I stop at once I may catch myself (but too late) saying that perhaps after all such a Charlemagne's lake may be a blessing.

# BOTTICELLI AT THE VILLA LEMMI.



# BOTTICELLI AT THE VILLA LEMMI.

A WOODEN frame thick overlaid with paste of sulphur applied to the face of the frescoes; the bricks deftly cut into, sawed, picked away from behind; the sulphur paste frame with adhering painted plaster pulled away from the broken, picked, jagged old wall; a second frame-work covered with wet gypsum applied to the back of each thin sheet of frescoed plaster; sulphur paste delicately peeled off the painted surface of the plaster, the back of which remains adhering to, encased in, the gypsum; that is the operation. A new back has been substituted for the old

wall; and the frescoes are intact, unspotted, safe, framed, portable, ready for the wooden cases of the packers, the seals of the officials, the van of the railway, the criticism of the experts, the gape of the public. Civilization has driven before it even dead art, even art faded to a ghost; and the pictures which some four hundred years ago Alessandro Botticelli painted in one of the back rooms of the little villa-farm outside Florence, are now upon the wall of the grand staircase of the Louvre.

This is what they have just done, and this is what gives me annoyance. Now, I sincerely think that I am quite without any morbid æsthetic aversion against modern times and modern arrangements: I often feel how much nobler in many ways of generous thought and endeavour, which we sniff at because it has become commonplace, is this prosaic age of ours than many another with which we associate ideas of romance; I sometimes even feel a doubt whether in

several branches of art itself, in its most delicate branch of poetry, these modern times have not given and are not giving work more completely beautiful than the work of times with more pretensions to poetry and picturesqueness. I cannot therefore suspect myself of morbid aversion to modern things and actions. Yet this particular modern action of removing the frescoes from the Villa Lemmi leaves in me a strong, though at first somewhat inarticulate, sense of dissatisfaction. It may be right, this instinctive and vague feeling of displeasure, or it may be wrong, but any way there it is; and my present object is exactly to discover whether this is a selfish and sentimental personal crotchet, or a well-founded and honest conviction. This is what I wish to do; and in order to do it, let me separate from one another the various impressions of the past, the various expectations of the future; let me place in some sort of intelligible order the

fragments of scarce conscious argument, which taken together make up or produce the vaguely painful sense that comes over me every time I remember the removal of those paintings from that place.

The first question which I hit upon in this ransacking of my consciousness, is one in which the explanation of the whole matter may possibly lie. The question is simply whether the removal of those paintings from one locality to another deprives me of a particular kind of pleasure, dependent for me upon the presence of these individual frescoes, in the same manner as the departure of a friend to some other country would deprive me of an analogous kind of pleasure obtainable only from the presence of an individual friend who has gone away. This seems a likely enough explanation, but I do not think it is in any way the true one. There are, indeed, there must be to every one, a certain small number of works of art which

are very much what to each of us is a certain small, very small number of friends; certain books or passages in books, certain pictures or statues, certain pieces of music, never to be able to read which again, to see again or hear once more, would be at the moment of first knowing that these things must be, a sharp pain, and with the passing of time, a sort of vague and dull nostalgia, coming ever and anon in moments of weakness and depression, like the hopeless longing for a face we can see only through a shifting mist of years, for a voice whose tone we can evoke for only one scarcely perceptible instant. Such works of art there must be for all to whom art is anything, although there can be but few from which we can thus be wholly and utterly separated; since a poem, a picture, a piece of music, are things whose identity can be almost indefinitely multiplied, not things, like friends, which live but once and only in one place. But among such things for

me are not those frescoes, nay, not any work of Botticelli. There are personal sympathies in art as in all things, harmonies more or less complete between certain works and certain minds; and Botticelli is to me one of those incompleter harmonies. Not but that I appreciate him: that I could, I think, weigh his merits fairly enough if fairness of judgment were the question, and not personal sympathy. I know him well, familiarly; but he is as one of those persons whom you are for ever meeting without ever especially seeking, familiar from sheer habit, perhaps justly enough appreciated for what they are; one of those people who never give you the satisfaction either of thoroughly liking or thoroughly disliking them, and who at the same time will not permit you to grow indifferent: suddenly charming you, when you are ill-disposed to them, with a look, a turn of the head, an intonation of the voice, and the next time as suddenly leaving you

dissatisfied, rubbing you the wrong way; till the perpetual alternation of liking and not liking, of agreeable surprise and disheartening disappointment grows monotonous, is foreseen; and yet even then the satisfaction of utter indifference is still maliciously withheld, for every now and then there unexpectedly gleams out that look, there vibrates that intonation which charms you, which annoys you, which drags you back again into the routine of surprised pleasure, disappointment, monotony, wearying, and yet too soon interrupted to become indifferent. This is how the matter stands between me and Botticelli; he is more sympathetic and less unsympathetic to me by far than certain of his fellow-workers, but with them I know exactly how much I shall like, how much I shall dislike; and with him, never. No, not even in the same painting. I am made capricious by his capriciousness; I am never in tune, always too high or too low

for him. I always catch myself thinking of this, that, or the other of his works; nay, of the abstract entirety of them all, differently from how I felt when last time I actually was in their presence, from how I shall feel when I actually am in their presence again. Oh the woebegone Madonnas, lanky yet flaccid beneath their bunched-up draperies, all tied in the wrong places, nay, rather strangely ligatured with coloured tapes into strange puffs and strange waists; Madonnas drooping like overblown lilies, yet pinched like frostbitten rosebuds, creatures neither old nor young, with hollow cheeks and baby lips, not consumed by the burning soul within like Perugino's hectic saints, but sallow, languid, life-weary with the fever which haunts the shallow lakes, the pasture-tracts of Southern Tuscany; seated with faces dreary, wistful, peevish, gentle, you know not which, before their bushes of dark-red roses, surrounded by their living hedges of seraph children, with

faces sweet yet cross like their own—faces too large, too small, which?—with massive jaws of obstinacy and vague eyes of dreaminess. Madonnas who half drop their babes in sudden sickening faintness, Christ children too captious and peevish even to cry; poor puzzled, half-pained, half-ravished angels; draperies clinging and flying about in all directions; arms twining, fingers twitching in inextricable knots; world of dissatisfied sentiment, of unpalatable sweetness, of vacant suggestion, of uncomfortable gracefulness, of ill-tempered graciousness, world of aborted beauty and aborted delightfulness, created, with infinite strain and discouragement, by the Florentine silversmith painter, hankering vainly after the perfect elegance and graciousness, the diaphanous sentiment of Umbria, and trying to turn the stiff necks and bend the stolid heads of the strong and ugly models of Filippino, Verrocchio, and Ghirlandajo; to twine and knot the scarves and draperies on their

thick-set bodies, to make solitary and contemplative passion burn in their matter-of-fact and humorous faces, as all such things could be only in the delicate, exquisite, morbid Umbrian boys and women of Perugino. No, this world, thus wearisomely elaborated by Sandro Botticelli, has no attraction for me; it is all bitter, insipid, like certain herbs and the juice pressed out of them; I fail to see the charm, I recognize the repulsion. And yet, even as I write, there crowds into my mind a certain swarm of angels, of eager, earnest, pale young faces, with wavy hair streaked with gold threads, and sweet lips, of which you feel that through them pass clear and fresh choristers' voices, voices which are so vocal, so unlike pipe, or reed, or string, and yet which have in their sweetness a something of the bleating of young sheep, making them but the sweeter; there come before me certain slim, erect, quaint, stag-like figures, all draped in tissues embroidered

with roses, and corn, and gilly-flowers, and others with delicate wreathed tresses drooping on to delicate and infinitely crinkled, half transparent white veils, and certain others yet, with slim and delicate arms, curved-in waists, and slender legs and feet, themselves wreathed, entwined, swaying like some twisted sprays of wind-flowers round some tall and bending wind-shaken reed: with the recollection of them comes a sense of spring, of trees still yellow with first beginnings of leaf, of meadows with the first faint dyes of their later dark-yellow and indigo patternings, of fields green with corn, and grey with still dry branches, of warm sun and cold air, and the sweet unripeness of the early year; and amidst all this, emerging from this vague tangle of impressions, a strange face, an erect long neck, with strange straight joining eyebrows, and thin curled lips, defiant, laughing, fascinating, capricious, capriciousness concentrated, impersonate; the capricious-

ness of the art, of the man, of myself, the capriciousness which will, if I leave these phantoms and go once more to the reality of Botticelli's works, make me meet again only slim and flaccid Madonnas, sickly, puling children, and angels all peevishness and airs and graces.

Such are my individual feelings towards Botticelli's art, and this incompleteness of sympathy between the great Florentine who tried to be an Umbrian and myself—or, if you prefer, my misappreciation of the peculiar exquisiteness and fascination of his work—must make it clear that my sense of dissatisfaction at the removal of his two frescoes from the Villa Lemmi cannot be due to the fact that in losing them I am being deprived of something analogous to the power of seeing and talking with a very dear friend. Moreover, this Florence in which I live is full of Botticelli's works, good and bad; and among those remaining are paintings of his superior to the frescoes

of the Villa Lemmi, and more distinctly attractive to me than they are. So that there can be on my part no sense of deprivation connected with those two particular frescoes. And furthermore, I must make a confession which will help to clear away any erroneous explanations which may still be in the way of the correct one; and that confession is, that less than two months hence I shall be in Paris, in the Louvre, with every opportunity of seeing those two Botticellis again; and that together with the knowledge of this I have the knowledge of the fact that being there, in Paris, in the Louvre, I shall feel no particular craving to look upon those two frescoes once more. Nay, I even foresee a certain avoidance of them; a something more than indifference to their being near at hand, within sight; an almost repugnance to see them in their new place. So that I am obliged to come round again, and seek my explanation elsewhere. Looking again in

my consciousness, the next thing I find is a very strong impression of the time when I saw those frescoes first, of the succeeding visits to them, or rather a vivid group of impressions which used to be connected in my mind with the few words—"the Botticellis at the Villa Lemmi." And as but very few people who lived in Florence or came hither even knew of the existence of these frescoes, discovered not ten years ago, and still unnoticed by the guide-book makers—and you may happen not to be among that small number—and as, moreover, it is now a matter of the past; I think I had better, in order to understand myself and be understood, try and give you an idea of the Villa Lemmi and the going there.

You followed, for some twenty minutes, the road towards Sesto Fiorentino, the castle of Petraia and the other places which lie at the foot of the Monte Morello, whose bl[illegible]adowing the passing clouds,

are patterned grey on grey, like some huge folds of greyish watered silk; then you turned off by another high road towards the old Medicean villa of Careggi, where Lorenzo died, whose castle-like machicolations and overhanging roof are just visible among the trees, while behind rise the little slopes of the Terzolle valley, grey with olive at the base, dark green and feathery with pine woods at the top, and all dotted with white farms and villas. Thus past one or two villa gates, and then you left the high road suddenly for a little rough short cut, with white walls, rudely patterned and overtopped by the whitish olive branches, on either side; in front rose, against a screen of dark cypress plumes, a little old white house, with heavily grated windows and a belvedere tower, opened out into a delicate pillared loggia, whence the pigeons swooped in flocks into the adjacent fields. That was Villa Lemmi. But you passed the old doorway, surmounted by the

stone escutcheon of Albizi or Tornabuoni, I know not which, and knocked at a wooden door, which being opened, a peasant woman or a little bare-legged brat led you into a kind of farmyard. Past the big mulberry-tree just yellowing into leaf, and the rose and currant bushes; under the stable archway, by the side of the dark cowshed, whence came lowing sounds and scent of hay and dairy; through a yard where the lemon-trees stood in big earthen jars, and the linen hung over the grass on the drying lines; and thence into the cool, dark, cloistered court of the villa—a court whose brick pavement was patterned with yellow and greenish lichen, and in which one's steps sounded drearily; but where the farm maid was drawing water out of the well in the centre, and the farm children were swinging on ropes from the pillars, making the arches resound with laughter and screams. On the first floor a narrow parapeted balcony ran round one side of this

court, and along this you followed the peasant woman clattering in her wooden clogs, with two or three little brown boys and girls, with broad little faces running into a sudden point, and hair cropped or tightly tied in a top-knot, like the children who sing and play, kick their legs and entwine their arms in Luca della Robbia's choir parapet high-reliefs. Then up a sudden step, a narrow door unlocked, and you entered a small, low room, the former scullery of the villa, where, about ten years ago, some kitchen-maid scraping at the wall with her knife laid bare a sudden patch of paint, a shot purple and red bit of drapery, a gold-streaked lock of hair; till, scraping well and ill, they scraped into existence two unguessed frescoes, and out of existence perhaps two for ever lost ones. Of the two frescoes, now in a very different place, the one shows four young women, advancing in hesitating and faltering procession, long, slender, with doubled-girdled, puffing

garments, green and mauve and white; and sweet, soft wistful young heads, vacillating, pouting red lips, and vague, shy grey eyes and loosened light hair, giving I know not what, perhaps some effaced flower, dropping it, with dainty, supple-wristed hands, into a folded cloth held by one dressed in the straight, stiff, foldless russet skirt of a Florentine matron; to the back a half rubbed out portico, a many jetted fountain; and to the side a little curly brown boy with iridescent wings holding an obliterated escutcheon; the whole closed in by a group of pointed pillarets half covered with plaster. The second fresco represents a company of damsels, in richly-hued antique garb, seated in a circle in a laurel grove; their garments once delicately embroidered with threads of gilding. One holds a globe; another, large featured like a statue and of bronzed complexion, rests an architect's square upon her shoulder; below reclines another with a

hand organ and a tambourine; on a raised throne in the middle sits a half-veiled lady holding a bow. Towards her, into this goodly company of sciences and arts, a nymph, a muse, with loosened yellow hair and wistful pointed face, is leading the young Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, stately yet timid; a noble and charming figure in scholar's gown of blue and purple shot silk, his fair long hair combed neatly from under a scarlet cap; a sweet and thoughtful face, thin and pale, with high arched nose and pale eyes, under much-curved, fanciful brows; a something between the scholar, the saint, and the page in his demure boyish elegance; a thing of courts as well as of the study.

These were the frescoes. One looked at them; then, between thus doing, looked also out of the little window, over the shimmering olives, the bright green corn, to where the pines and cypresses of the hill-side detached their featheriness against the

sky, and the white houses and tower of Fiesole, and its tiers and tiers of villas, rose high in the distance. And then, when one had given the last glance to the frescoes, and the woman had locked the door behind, one descended into the garden, or farmland; where, against the walls of the old villa, under its bowed-out window gratings, were spaliered any amount of the delicate May roses, of intensest pink, and a scent which made one think of the East, of the rose-gardens of Pæstum, of the paladin Orlando filling his helmet with crushed rose-leaves lest he might hear and be seduced by the song of the birds in the garden of the enchantress Falerina, where the Lamia wound her green coils through the grass, under the orchard trees, and the sirens sat and wove garlands in the clear blue depths of the lake.

Among the confused general impression left by many a visit to the frescoes and the garden, there remains distinct the remem-

brance of one particular late afternoon of spring at the Villa Lemmi. Going away from seeing the frescoes, we stepped on to the rusty old twisted iron balcony, and looked out on to the green country, dripping and misty with the afternoon's rain. A large cherry-tree, its white blossom thinned by budding leaves, was immediately below the balcony; then an expanse of fresh, bright green corn, beaten down by the rain, broken by the pale, scarce budding mulberry-trees, and dotted with farms and villas, undulating away upwards into the olive and cypress covered hills of Careggi; away, paler bluish, greener, and bounded like a lake by the blue slopes of Signa, with here and there a screen of poplars, an isolated black cypress, or a projecting square belfry, the sky and sunset gleaming through its pillars. The sun was setting; emerging, round, immense, rayless, golden, from beneath a bank of vapours, which gradually rolled aside; descending,

yellow among livid cloud and blue cold sky, until it disappeared behind the grey hills simulating a bank of clouds, or the clouds piled up in semblance of a ridge of hills, I know not which, down the Arno; leaving, as soon as it had disappeared, a bright speck, a spark, a glowing ember, on the top of the cloud hill, which grew and sent forth red feathery vapours of flame, turning the light grey cloud which hung above it, clear on the pale blue sky, into the flamelit cloud of smoke hanging over a volcano; filaments of red flame combed like hair at the narrow base, solid masses of turbid smoke-like vapour above. The ember left by the sun glowed redder and redder, sending, slowly and gradually, long yellow rays across the western sky; the glow died gradually away; the white mists wrapped the foot of the Apennine; the volcano red departed slowly from the cloud hills blue and cold; only the lower edge of a grey cloud, wet and distinct above the

high blue sky, still reddened and gilded by the departed blaze. A great greyness and dampness and stillness came over everything at last, till the sky remained white and livid, resting on shoals of heavy vapours. Even thus, four hundred years ago, Botticelli may also have watched the sun set as he left his work in the little quiet farm villa, before hurrying back to the city, or sauntering across the fields to the castellated Careggi yonder, where the Magnificent Lorenzo supped and discussed Plato and improvised verses about falcon hunts, comic paladins, or antique nymphs with Pico and Pulci and Politian.

This sort of impression used to hang to the words, "the Villa Lemmi Botticellis;" words which have now become meaningless, a mere momentary label, no better than a mere number, for the two frescoes just set up in the Louvre. And it is, I think, this change, this loss, which I vaguely resent every time I think of the removal of the

frescoes. Not merely for myself, since after all I have enjoyed, possessed the past, am by so much richer than my neighbours. Not even merely for those who come too late, to whom the Villa Lemmi will be unknown and the frescoes no better than any other paintings in the huge gallery; since for such persons will still remain other places, if not as perfect as the Villa Lemmi, yet akin to it: convents high among the barren grey hills overlooking the Sienese Maremma, where Signorelli and Sodoma painted while the wind moaned, as it moans now, through the thick cypresses and the pines which fill the ravine below Monte Oliveto; quiet little *scuole* of Venice, where you seek after the long row through the tortuous canals, after the sad green and grey and brown streakings of wall and water, the purple robes and gold-woven linen, the bronzed faces and auburn heads of the altar-pieces of Carpaccio and Bellini; secluded corners of Norman and Breton

towns, where the cathedral stands, with delicate thistles and dog-rose and hawthorn carved in its crumbling grey stone, and plants as delicate as they, stone pinks and long-seeded grasses grow in the crannies of its buttresses and belfry, round which circle the rooks; the cornfields and apple-orchards as near by as the black carved and colonnaded houses of the town: places where art still keeps its old, familiar, original framework of reality, of nature, of human life. The dissatisfaction with which I am filled is the dissatisfaction at no one particular loss, but at a whole tendency whose result is loss, which consists in wantonly ridding ourselves of our most precious artistic possessions; and of which this episode of the removal of the Villa Lemmi frescoes is but one instance among many.

I have said that this modern tendency deprives us of our most valuable artistic possessions; and this will doubtless seem rather an insane speech. For what is the aim of all

understand the spirit in which all these different works of art have been produced, the historical conditions by which they have been affected, the whole genealogy and rules of precedence of schools and artists: art is not only physically, but intellectually housed, it is as safe from the imbecile misinterpretation of former times as it is from the bullets of former generations of soldiers, the stones of former generations of street-boys, the smoke of long-snuffed-out altar candles. All this is evident, palpable, irrefutable, and all this means that mankind is growing daily more anxious to preserve its artistic properties. Evident, palpable, irrefutable; far be it from me to attempt to disprove it. But there is an artistic possession more valuable than any picture, statue, cathedral, symphony, or poem whatsoever — indeed, the most precious artistic property that we possess. It is the power, the means, the facility, due to the condition both of our minds and of

works of art, of assimilating art into life. Such assimilation means not only the enjoyment at the actual moment of seeing picture or statue, of hearing poem or symphony; but also (what is of more importance) the wealth of garnered-up impression which remains to us when the picture or statue has been long out of sight, the words of the poem have long been forgotten, the chords of the symphony have for years ceased to vibrate. For in the life of each of us there is, or might be, a sort of unseen treasury of beautiful things; we have the power if we choose of carrying with us many a precious immaterial thing, many a tapestry wrought by ourselves out of the threads, imperishably tinted, taken from poem or picture, with which we may deck ourselves when fate leads us into mere whitewashed mental lodgings, or squalid moral gaols; many a beautiful nicknack of thought or feeling, or fragmentary form, which remain to us when we are beggared

of all else; and again, many a thing which will enhance the already excellent things, which will be as unseen lutes or viols with which to make music through the silent spring evening meadows, the silent autumn woods. A great stock of wealth, all contained in a tiny, nay, invisible thing, much more valuable than any purse of old Fortunatus: a stock also, and mind this, of real wealth, not of the mere delusions with which in our weakness we try sometimes to sweeten our life, the dreams of passion and worship, to enjoy which we must waste our precious time in sleep, merely to wake up poorer and sadder than before. This we have, or might have; and to obtain it we require not merely to enjoy art superficially, momentarily, but to assimilate it into our nature, to make its impressions our own. But this possibility of assimilation of art into life cannot be obtained by the mere wishing; it depends upon conditions which we can produce, and

which we can also, and frequently do, prevent. As recognition means previous knowledge, so does assimilation mean a certain homogeneousness between that which absorbs and that which is absorbed; and this seems to be the case far more in intellectual and moral matters than in mere physical ones. Completely new impressions are not perceived, since the very organs of perception are formed by the repetition of a but slightly varying act of perceiving; the harmonic combinations which seem most obvious to our ears would probably have left but a completely muddled impression on even the most musical of the men of antiquity. Hence it is that if artistic impressions are to be assimilated into our life, there must already exist in our life a habit of impression akin to those given wholesale by art; and also that there must be in the manner in which artistic impressions are presented to us something familiar, something analogous to the manner in

which we obtain the ordinary inartistic impressions of life. There must, for such assimilations of art into life, be a rudiment of art already in life, and a habit of life still clinging to art.

The rudiment of art exists in our life from the very nature and origin of art; since those instincts which make us appreciate the complex things of art have originated and developed during our contact with the things of reality; we love, in nature, those lines, colours, shapes, and so forth, which art later combines for us on a larger scale; we love the elements of the work before the work itself is dreamed of. Thus the first condition for real artistic assimilation is already partly fulfilled from the very origin and history of our artistic perceptions. And quite of late, in our own country particularly, there has been a half-instinctive, half-deliberate attempt at supplying that much of the necessary familiarity with beautiful form and colour

which is not provided by the hills and clouds and trees all about us. For, as during the best period of Antiquity and the Middle Ages, with that flower of theirs which we call the Renaissance, the extraordinary activity of perception of form and colour produced not merely the imperishable works of independent and useless art, but also a great amount of beauty in all manner of humble, useful things; so, by a sort of reversing of phenomena, the laboriously acquired appreciation of the qualities of great works of art has in our time produced among a minority a greater irritability of artistic perception, a dissatisfaction with ugliness in common household properties, which has made people seek to surround themselves no longer with the hideous furniture, hangings, and utensils of twenty years ago, but with copies of those of the days when the sense of beauty which built cathedrals and painted Sixtine frescoes had its way

also with the meanest chairs and tables and pots and pans. There are, indeed, some persons whom a smattering of modern ideas concerning the spontaneity of all things has made suspicious and contemptuous of this sudden preoccupation about the shapes of chairs and tables, and the colours of carpets and chintzes; and who, because this movement is the result of deliberate study, and therefore artificial, predict that it must for this reason be sterile. But the processes to which we owe so many now apparently spontaneous things, transplantation, irrigation, cropping, grafting, are all of them perfectly deliberate and artificial acts; and as in point of fact all progress has originated in a minority, and the sole condition of its success is that the majority should be prepared to accept it, I think that this modern attempt at æsthetic improvement will certainly result, if not in improving our own art, at least in making us far

sible and familiar to every educated person. Art, when limited to such works as can be bought only by the very rich, becomes little better than the concomitant of French cookery, dresses from Worth, and hideously set diamonds: an object of ostentatious luxury; whereas if only a little of the artistic power concentrated in such work could be bestowed upon things of easy multiplication, small price, and ordinary use, it would not only bring pleasure into many lives in which pleasure is as scarce as flowers in a close, smoky town, but also train innumerable men and women into an habitual perception of beauty, without which they must wander through all the galleries provided for them by the nation with mere vacant, unfamiliar wonder, and leave them as poor of durable artistic impressions as they entered them. There are, doubtless, many things for which the writer must always envy the artist, greater freedom and charm of impression, and

cotton-spinner, or the staircase of a Jewish broker, much more should be said than I can say in this place.

I let myself be tempted into digression upon a subject in which the moral dignity of art, or rather of artists, seems to me greatly concerned, just at the moment when I had pointed out that of the two conditions necessary for the assimilation of artistic impressions into life, the one, namely, that the rudimentary perceptions of form and colour beauty should already be familiar to us before we go to great art, was not only partially provided by our natural surroundings, but further and most importantly facilitated by the recent movement in favour of giving beauty of form and colour to the necessaries which surround our daily home life. But there remains the other condition, whose fulfilment seems to me almost as necessary for the real absorption of art into life—the condition that there should be in our

manner of receiving artistic impressions something analogous to that absence of strain, that familiarity with which we unconsciously assimilate the other impressions of our lives. Now, it so happens that the tendency of our time is towards rendering more and more difficult the fulfilment of this second condition, and that this is due to that self-same interest in art which has been so beneficial in beautifying common things; by the same droll, but quite accountable, self-contradiction which makes enthusiasts for old architecture combine to protect the horrid disfigurement of historic buildings by the architects of the seventeenth and eighteenth century because they are in terror of the possible disfigurement thereof by the architects of our own day; the protection against modern Vandalism being freely extended to the Vandal work of the past. For this comparatively recent preoccupation about art has, while tending to surround ordinary men and women with

beautiful furniture and accessories, at the same time induced a perfect habit of removing works of art from their natural and often beautiful surroundings in order to place them in a kind of artificial stony Arabia of vacuity and ugliness. I should call this the modern gallery-and-concert tendency. We are so horribly afraid that a picture should get damaged by the smoke of the candles on the altar whence its Madonna, seated on her carpeted throne before the lemon spaliers, and its viol-and-lute-playing angels rise almost fairy-like from among the freshly-cut sweet peas and roses, the scarlet pomegranate, and bright pink oleander blossoms in the coarse jars before it; we are so horribly afraid that smoke or sacristan (both freely taken into account by the painter) should possibly injure this picture, that we hasten to buy it, new frame it, stick it up under the glaring light of a gallery, among six dozen other pictures which either kill or are

killed by it, with perhaps the additional charm of a plate glass, which reflects the outlines of the benches and chairs and the beautiful faces of the gaping or loafing visitors. And in our fervent appreciation we thus make it infinitely more difficult for the work of art to be appreciated. No, not appreciated; I have used the wrong word. We *do* appreciate our works of art; we know all about the filiation of the schools and the characteristics of the epoch; we know, every ignoramus of us, that, after all, there are only three or four Leonardos and two Giorgiones in the wide world, that all the other exquisite things are "mere school-work, or by some imitator of the seventeenth century." We know that we must not let our feelings cozen us with respect to antiques; that, after all, we have only five or six utterly battered pieces of stone which can be unhesitatingly proved to be the statues mentioned by Pausanias, all the rest being the

less talked of the better. All this we know, and the going to a gallery becomes daily more like a solemn sitting in judgment or listening to evidence; we grow every day more and more appreciative.

But do we enjoy more and more, or less and less? Enjoy freely and simply; let the impressions sink deliciously into us; keep them clinging to us as the unfading perfume of certain Eastern essences? I think, if we ask ourselves honestly, we shall find that we do so daily less and less. We shall find that even as some of our moments of keenest musical pleasure have been during the casual hearing, in a church into which we have strayed, from a window as we passed along the street, some familiar melody sung certainly not by Madame Patti, played certainly not by Joachim or Rubinstein; so also the impressions of full artistic enjoyment are strongest, not from mornings in the Elgin Room or the Louvre, but from an hour or so of ram-

bling through some old town like Verona, or Padua, or Siena, where we have found some picture by Girolamo dai Libri, or Moroni, or Sodoma isolated over an altar, in the place, among the cheap finery, the tarnished finery, in the solitude and silence for which it was painted by its artist.

But we are too persuaded of the awful value of art to leave it where it can be quietly enjoyed; instead of letting it crumble into vague impressions which are the rich and fruitful soil of our mind, we like to embalm art, to mummify it splendidly, to let it grow into a useless, utterly inorganic, unassimilated piece of grandeur. The fact is that instead of considering a fine statue or picture or piece of music as something very akin, in mode of impressing us and value, to a fine group of trees, or a fine sheet of water, or a fine cluster of clouds, we have contracted an almost unconscious but intensely strong habit of considering such

things from an historical, scientific, state-record point of view: as a papyrus of Pharaoh or a prepared cobra in a glass jar. Hence we have for our artistic heir-looms scruples exactly like those we should have about such scientific grimcracks. If a papyrus is incomplete, we do not set our learned men to patching it; and if a statue is hideously mutilated, we do not let our artists restore it; entirely over-looking the fact that the only value of the papyrus is in the authenticated facts it hands down from antiquity, whereas the only value of the statue is the beauty which that unrepaired mutilation may easily have marred. I am far from thinking that the Renaissance was right in having modern arms given to figures which had quite balance and completeness enough without such restorations; I am thinking at present of the question of noses and their absence; and I am well aware that I shall be set down as an utter Vandal

for suggesting the mere question whether the worst restoration is not a less barbarity for us to inflict than the deliberate condemnation of some noble antique head to continue for ever a partial eyesore? Yet, feeling myself already a Vandal, I am hardened to the accusation, and I put forward my suggestion, which is as follows: No modern nose could disfigure or alter an antique head one-millionth part as much as that hideous wound (as in our lovely Demeter of the British Museum) which not only alters the whole relations of the features and distorts the most beautiful face by its unseemly rough flatness and its stump between eyes and mouth, but gives a loathsome sense of disease as completely distorting of the intellectual aspect of an antique as the physical mutilation is of its visual beauty. Nor do I know whether a collection of Phidian and Praxitelian gods and goddesses, looking like so many maimed and

scrofulous creatures out of Orcagna's Triumph of Death, would have pleased a Greek; nor whether in our prudery about restoration we are not in reality respecting less the genius of the great masters who planned whole, entire, healthy figures, than a ragamuffin's hand which defaced their work. Be this as it may, our modern fear of restoration greatly increases, instead of diminishing, the natural difficulty of assimilating impressions of beauty. It is left to our minds to reconstruct the mutilated statues; and after the greatest strain in this direction, we go away with the impression not so much of sane, living beauty, as of depressing, puzzling, and often actually revolting imperfection.

Another form of this modern appreciation of art, which makes art more and more difficult to assimilate into life, is the indignation of many people at such hotch-potch things as operas; because in every opera there is so much that is wholly

unmusical, or of small musical value; because an opera is not the same serious concern as an oratorio or a concert. It is perfectly true, as for instance Mr. Edmund Gurney has pointed out, that there is no possibility of making an opera into a well-blended mixture of several arts. But just for that reason there is in this incongruous hotch-potch a power of bringing art into life much greater than there is in oratorio or concert. The strain of a concert, of the mere attention of the ear for two hours, while the mind and eye remain idle, is æsthetically wrong: it taxes instead of refreshing the musical sense; it is good for people who want to know what certain music is like, not for people who want to enjoy it. In the opera, on the contrary, the musical impressions are separated into groups by other æsthetical impressions or by impressions of real life: the melodies may be taken or left at will, a *sine quâ non*

this of all æsthetical enjoyment; they are not forced upon us whether we be fit to enjoy them or not. An opera is a sort of little epitome of life: you move, look about, follow an action with eyes and mind, look at faces, dresses, and movements, take in words and sights; see and chat with your friends; and if, with all this, you listen to the music, it is freely, as you would listen to the sound of birds among the numerous impressions of a walk in the country. It is quite wonderful how a little cheap plot, a little cheap scenery, dress and gesticulation, a little cheap words, a little talk with a neighbour or watching of unknown faces, how all this trumpery refreshes, enables one really to assimilate music. The explanation is that in this case our life, into which the music (if it is to be of any use) is to be absorbed, is going on, has all its powers of assimilation due to easy and general excitement. In the case

of a concert our minds are tied as with a ligature: we may plunge our soul in music, but our spiritual life-blood is stagnant, and we are neither warmed nor refreshed. The difference between an opera and a concert is that between a town, with all its trivial details and its statues and pictures here and there, and an awful expanse of gallery.

Hence I have called this modern tendency towards isolating art of life, the gallery-and-concert tendency; and it is very principally as a signal example of this gallery-and-concert tendency that I resent the removal of the Botticellis from the Villa Lemmi. The villa with its frescoes was like some quiet evening with open windows, when the music is interrupted by conversation; and when the sough of the trees and the chirping of the crickets outside, the noise of the children on the stairs within, keeps up a sense that besides art nature exists and life goes on. Of course such matters are

often purely economical: a man cannot be expected to forego many thousands of francs for the sake of the superior artistic pleasure of a very few strangers, nor can a nation be expected to be so civilized as to prefer possessing frescoes among exquisite surroundings hundreds of miles off, to possessing those same frescoes among arid surroundings within a few yards. No one can blame the owner of Villa Lemmi for selling his frescoes, nor the French Government for buying them. But those should be blamed to whom the kind of action typified by this Villa Lemmi business is a matter of great pride and self-congratulation, a sort of triumph of civilization: the daily increasing class of people who care for art, but who see nevertheless in any statue or picture still unmolested in its original church villa, merely a sort of huge æsthetic specimen, which must be immediately uprooted or run through with a pin, that it may as soon

looks as if nothing more wonderful or important than the reaping of the corn, the bleaching of the wheat, the birth of an additional calf or farmer's brat, had taken place since this time last year. The red cart is drawn up outside the old gate with its stone escutcheon, while the vegetables from the garden or the barrels from the vineyard on the hillside are being piled into it; and the row of bells on the horse's brass-studded harness jingle as he shakes his fly-worried head; the cows are still being milked in the dark stable by the pale-green mulberry-tree; the vines still pruned on the spalier along the blackened wall; the roses still blow, and shed their pink petals on the strawberry beds all round the house; the brass pitcher

peasant children still swing between the columns; the old villa, with its square tower opened into a pillared loggia, looks just the same among the green cornfields and dark cypresses, against its background of olive-grey hills. The same as it did last year; the same, most likely, as it did four hundred years ago. It has lost its frescoes; but, for all the greatness of Botticelli, it has lost less than have lost those poor, hustled, jostled paintings, expatriated, exiled on to that Louvre staircase. And, though it be quite forgotten and neglected henceforward, the Villa Lemmi has lost less than have we, good, self-satisfied people, in losing the sense that a painting is better in a farmhouse where it can be enjoyed, than in the most superb gallery where it will be overlooked.



# ROCOCO.



# ROCOCO.

A POLITE editor has recently sent me, in recognition of certain studies I once made of Italian eighteenth-century things, a copy of a fine new edition of the complete fairy plays of Carlo Gozzi. I feel flattered, and greatly obliged. But I feel also within myself an odd, mixed feeling, half pleasurable, half sad, as if an old playfellow had suddenly thought of presenting me with some particular sweet or some particular toy for which I may have had a passion — now long forgotten — in my childhood. Most children—at least, I wish to believe it — are consumed by violent passions less material than those which are satisfied at the pastrycook's or the fruit-stall.

Passions, strong, ideal, all-absorbing, such as can exist, perhaps, only when our fancy has not yet been messed and muddled away over realities; and is able to spread its wings freely, unconscious of the frontier of the possible and the impossible. At that time of life we are probably already in possession of whatever reasoning power and passion we may ever possess; what is missing is merely experience. We are like people born blind, and whom an operation has suddenly given—I cannot say restored to—sight: we see things and their qualities, colours and shapes; but we do not perceive, we do not yet feel, the proportions and the distances that exist between them. The moon is up there in the heavens: big, round, white, bright; and we put out our hand to snatch it. We see things without the intellectual connection furnished by experience; but as we are fully possessed of logic and imagination, we weave round everything a mystic net-

work of unreal relations—half understood, mysterious, which has the strange sparkle of those thinnest of all cobwebs, called, in France, threads of the Virgin, that are stretched, intangible, white, flaming with dew diamonds, on every hedge in early autumn. It is at this moment of our life that we experience those imaginative passions, inexplicable, dumb, almost tragically serious, for some historic personage, at whose very name we redden or shed tears; for the people of the Middle Ages, as they exist in the novels of Scott, of Ainsworth, and G. P. R. James; for the Indians of Chateaubriand, of Fenimore Cooper, and Aymard. Passions, all these, which we conceal from all grown-up folk, because we know they would make fun of them; and we feel that, in this case, making fun would be something like sacrilege.

To me, who had remained, like the Prince Parzival of Wolfram and of Wag-

ner, a child and an idiot long after the legitimate period, there came, after the usual passions for Joan of Arc and Marie Antoinette, after the more fervid passion for the Natchez, the Sioux, and especially the inconvenient and entrancing Mohicans —a passion, be it said, which made me walk along the beach looking pathetically in the direction where America probably lies or swims—after all these childish passions, there came then to me an unaccountable passion for the people and things of the eighteenth century, and more particularly of the eighteenth century in Italy. How it arose would be difficult to explain; perhaps mainly from the delight which I received from the melodies of Mozart and Gluck, picked out with three fingers on the piano. I followed those sounds; I pursued them, and I found myself in the midst of the Italian eighteenth century.

I found myself in the midst of the Italian

eighteenth century. I have selected that form of words with the intention of your taking it literally. I really did find my way into that period, and really did live in it; for I began to see only the things belonging thereunto; and I had little or no connection with anything else. The eighteenth century existed for me as a reality, surrounded by faint and fluctuating shadows, which shadows were simply the present. Things presented themselves to me only from their eighteenth-century side, real or—very often—imaginary. I meditated over such houses as had probably been built in the last century; or, if they were visibly older, I directed my attention upon such portions of their existence as lay in that time; I didn't care a pin about the Renaissance, or Antiquity, or the Middle Ages. In Rome—the scene of all this—my particular predilection was the little shell-shaped square of Sant' Ignazio, where the semi-

circle of houses, each with its plaster laurel-branch and shell, its little balconies of twisted iron, seems arranged as a background for a comedy by Goldoni.

Behind our house, under the wall of the Pincian, there were still the ruins of the old Aliberti Theatre; and many are the half-hours I spent leaning on the kitchen balcony and dreaming of the songs of Pergolisi and Paisiello which had once sounded among the broken and burnt-out walls of that famous theatre; songs which I nearly succeeded in hearing, accompanied by the creaking of the bucket journeying along its iron wire, the final plop when it dived into the well, the screams of the children playing in the garden, and the snatches of song of the maids washing up the dishes.

And then in spring, wandering under the huge ilexes, or on the anemone-starred grass of the majestic Roman villas, I would think of the rows of gilded coaches that used to draw up before the little palace, of the

companies of ladies and cavaliers, in powder and patches, who had once formed bright spots of colour on the blackness of the avenues. Or, if the something so supremely spring-like, the something in those flowering pastures beneath the pines and the bay-trees that inevitably suggests Proserpine and the valley of Enna, brought up to my mind more pastoral images, the shepherds and shepherdesses were always little figures of Dresden china with embroidered waist-coat and *andrienne*.

I began to study that period—to read the books, even the newspapers, of the last century, which seemed to me full of actuality. The dingy bookstalls, the rows of useless and dirty old books exhibited for sale along the walls of palaces and churches, had for me a magical attraction. I became, I may boast, a remarkably well-educated young person of the end of the eighteenth century, perfectly up to all the last new

things of that time, and able to cut a very pretty figure, discussing encyclopedism, rival composers and singers, nay, even personal tittle-tattle, in the *salon* of some Arcadian muse.

But I was not satisfied with reading. I should have liked to see, to hear; if not directly, at least through the mediumship of some one who had seen and heard the things of those days. There was in me a vague hope of being able to come nearer to that century, of finding, in some mystic way and mystic place, a hidden corner thereof. I was tremendously interested in very old people, hoping that they might bring me into contact with the days of their childhood; for I forgot all that immense sea of nineteenth century in which their few impressions of earlier times must have got drowned, or at least discoloured; and many disappointments did not quell my ardour in seeking out these precious half-living relics of my beloved period. The

disappointments were numerous. But, on the other hand, how delightful when this or that old creature said, "When I was a child they used still to act Metastasio's plays;" or, "My father used to talk of the way Pacchierotti sang at Lucca in 1780"! What a moment that was when my dear old singing master suddenly remembered that he had heard Cimarosa sing some of his own comic songs!

My dreams of a sort of St. Brandan's Isle, containing somewhat of the life of my dear eighteenth century, were, I need scarcely say, never realized. But every now and then I came upon some little corner whence that century seemed to have only just departed, leaving in the atmosphere a faint smell of musk and hair-powder.

Such a place was the little villa (I fancy now turned into a *café concert!*), surrounded by a pretty bit of garden which had once been the *Parrhasian Grove* of the Roman

Academy of Arcadian Shepherds. The house was full of old portraits; the neglected garden was bright in May and June with flowers sprung, so to speak, from the bulbs and slips planted in former days—an elegy which you touched with your hand and trod under foot.

Another such place was the former convent of San Giacomo Maggiore at Bologna, converted into a music school by the prefects of Napoleon. How many happy hours have I not spent in those halls, in those refectories and cells, from whose walls looked down a crowd of composers and singers and noble amateurs in bobwigs or pigtails, doing the dignified or the graceful, leaning on their harpsichords, a music-roll in their hands, smirking fatuously at the forgetful world! For me a visit to that place was a visit of ceremony; I invariably took a fresh pair of gloves. You could not present yourself badly got up before all those distinguished and delicately dressed people.

And, of course, in that crowd of poets and composers, and singers and fine ladies, there was always one particular person whom I worshipped, growing perfectly crimson with rage every time that he or she was lightly spoken of in some old memoir or letter. I knew them very well, these delightful objects of my adoration, but only from a distance, on account of the excessive respect and admiration, which made me as timid as a half-fledged boy coming for the first time into a drawing-room full of ladies.

The result of all this fantasticating, of this unconsciously acted romance, was naturally enough a real and genuine romance, I mean a romance on paper. I conceived a grand historico-musical novel, on the model of *Consuelo*, but only far, far more beautiful and interesting. There was to be a little German Court of the early

eighteenth century, a crazy Elector, a philanthropic and despotic minister, a perfidious favourite dwarf, some delightful ladies, and an Italian singer, the hero and *Deus ex machinâ* of the whole: a perfect eighteenth-century ideal of the Télémaque, Sir Charles Grandison, and Re Pastore sort. Round these persons moved a crowd of politicians, of philosophers, of poets, and of villains, all of whom discussed during chapters and chapters the "Theory of Sensations" of Locke and Helvétius, the musical reforms of Gluck, the "Contrat Social" of Rousseau; subjects that in my eyes were palpitating with activity. This novel was my companion during several years—my companion, be it understood, only in my own head. I wrote little of it, and with extreme slowness, perpetually adding and altering. There was no hurry. All my life was before me wherein to write this masterpiece; and it would be a well-employed life. Why

begin at once? Was there not plenty of time?

Thus I argued. But there was a possibility which had not entered into my calculations. A horrible possibility! to which I can barely bring myself to allude; a possibility the thought of which would have been a profanation. The possibility that, as time went by, I might . . . No. The thought never dawned in my mind. I remained perfectly loyal. I continued to believe most sincerely in my eighteenth-century novel, and my duty of writing it. But somehow, I cannot tell how, it so happened that I began little by little to take an interest also in things which had no connection with the eighteenth century. I persevered in my *rococo* studies, but to them I gradually added others, studies, for instance, of the art of Antiquity and the Renaissance.

And gradually, insidiously, I became

absorbed in them. I went on thinking about the eighteenth century, but no longer in the same way. I determined to write a book about it, but the book was no longer that famous novel. It became necessary to explain to the world that this despised eighteenth century was most important in the history of art; that, in the domain of music and the drama, it takes rank among the great artistic periods of the world's history, along with the times of Pericles and of Leo X.

Pericles; Leo X.; history of art; artistic periods! how little did I understand at that moment the meaning of all this sudden eruption of philosophical and historical Hegelian verbiage! I really imagined that I loved the eighteenth century as much as ever. Alas, all this phraseology of modern criticism signified that my much-loved century had ceased to be alive, that it had become, in my eyes, a mere corpse, and that I was preparing to dissect it! It sig-

nified that I looked at it no longer from within, but from without; that in issuing from the eighteenth century, I had emerged also out of childhood; that the days of great imaginative passions, of Joan of Arc and Marie Antoinette, of Sioux and Mohicans, were gone by for ever.



# PROSAIC MUSIC AND POETIC MUSIC.



# PROSAIC MUSIC AND POETIC MUSIC.

THE blaring trumpets of the Prologue in Heaven, the thundering hymns of the Epilogue, were still shrilling and rumbling in my ears, like the echoes of a distant storm; my fancy was crowded with all that phantasmagoric jumble and jostle of mediæval and antique things, Faustus, Helen, the devil, the witches, the sirens and oreads, of Boito's *Mefistofele;* when I went to hear for the second time an opera I am very fond of, the *Matrimonio Segreto.* To hear within forty-eight hours an opera by Boito and an opera of Cimarosa's, is an æsthetic experience such as presents itself

rarely. It means a meeting of incongruous and hostile things, rather like that very adventure of Dr. Faustus and Helen of Troy, of whom we have been speaking.

'Tis a fantastic experience, this meeting of the arch-modern with the old-fashioned, of an art literally of the future, seeking for new horizons and countries unexplored, and an art which might be called of the more than past—fitting into some verbal conjugation which means "a thing that has been and never will be again," unknown to our miserable grammars. A fantastic experience in itself, and one which results rather in disconnected bizarre impressions, than in such critical theories as are manufactured with ruler and compasses. You are therefore requested to expect in the following remarks neither logical sequence nor æsthetic principles. Should you persist in so doing, you would be disappointed, like those friends of Hoffman's crazy Kapellmeister Kreisler, who, having dropped the

snuffers into his piano and broken the principal strings, had the happy thought of describing in words the things he had intended to suggest with his notes.

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That blast of the seven trumpets, those strange shivered chords, the earthquake rumble of all that orchestra, and the anthem which issues out of it all, strong and placid like a rift of blue sky when the clouds have been torn asunder after the blackness of the storm; this cosmic or seraphic drama, fitter for Dante than for Goethe, goes to my brain as goes only one other thing—a fragment of a psalm by Benedetto Marcello, poet and composer, imaginative and aristocratically eclectic artist, artistic ancestor of Arrigo Boito.

Then there is that serenade, that invocation of the siren, which we must imagine those two demi-goddesses singing, not as on the stage (for the stage is the death of

all poetic conceptions), stupidly standing before the footlights, but wandering with interlaced hands through some island garden, some orchard inundated by the moon, and surrounded by the misty moonlit sea; the tremulousness of the moonlight, the throb of the sea, the thrill of the hidden insects, the alternate slumbering and awakening of the wanderer's fancy, all contained in that duet. But there is something more beautiful still and more fascinating. I mean that duet in the prison between Faust and the poor crazy Margaret, that tranquil wavelike swaying upon those two or three notes, which widens like the circles in the water, from one modulation gently to the other, while the words describe, what the music seems to give, the lapping of the tide on that shore untrodden by all earthly cares.

Poetic music this, suggestive; and which, besides its own beauty, seems to give us something more, and more exquisite than

itself. No; not more exquisite, but more subtle and elusory.

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The long and the short of the matter, in all that confusion of the *Matrimonio Segreto*, is simply this, that an old noodle, who is also as deaf as a post, wants to marry his daughter, already secretly married to the shop-boy, to an English nobleman called Milordo Robinson, an extraordinary grasshopper being with green coat-tails down to his heels, and a starched necktie up to his eyes; while, on the other hand, the same counter-jumping young hero is being made red-hot love to by the sister of his employer, a toothless and sentimental Tabitha. Hence endless mistakes and misunderstandings, with consequent tremendous bickerings, rages, blows, laughter, feminine shrillnesses and masculine bellowings. As to the poetic element, it enters into the business to much the same extent as it would in reality—that is to say, not at all. And here I may

parenthetically remark, that in the way of *poetic suggestiveness*, except in so far as it is distilled by our modern brains on contact with the past, there is not much to be squeezed out of the good folk of the eighteenth century.

And yet . . . while I watch these domestic battles of a respectable shopkeeper's household of the year 1792: this love-making of what looks like an abigail in striped skirt and coloured apron, and a footman in topboots and a pigtail; all this while I feel something moving about in my fancy, which something or other is not prose, is not caricature; nay, which is, putting it quite plainly, poetry. No; I was wrong. It is not poetry, it is music. Counter-jumping Adonis of a Paolino, hero of measuring staff and scissors; Carolina, vulgar little shopkeeper's daughter—some curious metamorphose seems to be at work upon you. In that famous air, "Before Aurora appears in the heavens"

(no more is said about Aurora, but instead, a great deal about travelling carriages, whips, postillions), and in that duet where, with the tallow candle in one hand and the shabby portmanteau in the other, the young people prepare to slip out of the paternal house; in these, and in ever so many melodies and fragments of melody, there is something undefinable, something, strange to say, which makes the same impression as those phantasmagoric visions of *Mefistofele;* something that at bottom, is of identical natural, something we call music, and feel inclined to call poetry.

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It really does seem at times as if there existed between us and the men of the late eighteenth century a perfect abyss; one wonders whether the series of human lives has really been uninterrupted. This is especially the case in all matters imaginative; for, as I have already remarked, those amiable great-grandfathers and great-grand-

mothers were possessed of little poetic fancy, or if they had it, contrived to put it successfully under a bushel. This reflection has arisen in my mind from a comparison between the subject of to-night's opera, the *Matrimonio Segreto*, and the opera of two days since, namely *Mefistofele*.

Yes, you will answer, but is not one of these comic and the other serious? Quite true, but this makes no difference. A comic piece can have as much poetry in it as a serious one (all Shakespeare's comedies, and Musset's, are there to prove it); and the eighteenth century was equally flat and unimaginative in both styles. Nay, it is odd that the most imaginative subject that ever fell into the hands of an eighteenth century composer, happened to be that of a comic opera, *Don Giovanni*, a tragi-comedy of savage and fantastic Spanish comicality, reduced to utter prose first by Moliere, then by Goldoni, and finally by Mozart's libretto writer, D'Aponte.

In short, I defy any one to show me an opera libretto of the eighteenth century which is imaginative in the same sense as *Mefistofele*. Metastasio's opera librettos have a poetic quality, dramatic interest, pathos, even grandeur; but they have nothing imaginative, although he hunted for subjects not merely in Plutarch and Herodotus (whose names he always put at the end of the "argument," learnedly contracted, with those of Sanchoniathon, Berosus, Ocellus Lucanus, like Dr. Primrose's friend, lest any one should think he did not work sufficiently hard for his salary of Court Poet), not merely in Plutarch and Herodotus, but also in Ariosto and Tasso. On the other hand, Gluck and his librettist Calsabigi, both of them furious reformers, pre-Wagnerian Wagnerists, were never struck with the idea, which every fifth-rate composer would have to-day, of using up in their opera the barbaric, fantastic, and gruesomely imaginative element contained in

the massacre of Orpheus by the frantic Maenads. Orpheus and Eurydice are sent home quietly, at the end of the third act, like a newly-married couple returning from their honeymoon.

All those good composers of the eighteenth century, from Carissimi, their precursor, to Rossini their latest representative, manufactured their music as other men manufacture soap or cloth (and much in the same way, I may add, as were manufactured also the cathedrals of the Middle Ages and the frescoes of the Renaissance), at so much a day. Sometimes they put into the business more conscience or more genius, and sometimes less; but they worked on, all of them, in the same happy unconsciousness of any imaginative suggestiveness. And when the public or the manager wished it, these great masters of delicate melody, of magisterial counterpoint (at least in their sacred music), were quite pleased to set afresh, once, twice, or even three times, the

same libretto, the same words, as they were quite willing (except for natural human laziness) also to overhaul or exchange the music written specially for some situation, because it did not suit their singers to sing those particular pieces.

What an abyss between a man like Boito and these musical bricklayers, tailors, cobblers of the last century! Nevertheless, we must believe Hegel, a sort of Council of Trent in all æsthetic matters, and who taught, what all professors of æsthetics are bound to teach, namely, that music is *the* romantic art above all others, that is to say the art where the concern for the subject, for the poetical suggestion, for what the Germans call *Inhalt*, entirely lords it over any concern for the mere form.

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"Canta Sirena — Canta Sirena" — this tune of *Mefistofele*, knocking about in my memory, suddenly comes in collision with the theme of the second finale of the

*Matriomonio Segreto.* This is indeed poetic and suggestive art, *romantic* art, this of Boito's. After all, Hegel doubtless knew what he was talking about. Poetic, romantic, suggestive—But suggestive of what? Of the siren, to be sure, and the full moon. But, after all, where is the siren? where is the full moon? In the words. As to the music, it would be difficult to point out in what particular arrangement of notes there is any allusion to a siren or a full moon; indeed it might be hard to convey either of these two items to the mind of the audience, if that audience happened not to understand the words.

What is more is that I have a similar difficulty in finding in the arrangement of notes which constitutes the second finale of the *Matrimonio Segreto* any indication of the marriage of a shop-boy and a shop-keeper's daughter, and of their consequent flight down the paternal stairs with a tallow candle in one hand and a portmanteau in the other;

still less any indication of the presence of papa, snoring unsuspectingly in bed. Nay, if some poet of my acquaintance would only be so obliging as to fit a couple of verses about sirens and full moons to the tune of this duet, I really see no reason why . . . No. The thought is odious. No self-respecting creature could assert that these notes, associated during ninety years with the difficulties of a shop-boy and a shop-keeper's daughter, with the tallow candle, the portmanteau, and the snoring of papa Geronimo, might, if only you clapped on a few verses about the siren and the full moon, serve equally in evoking the vision of that June moonlight when Helen of Troy and her women, moonbeams vaguely humanized, wander about among the Centaurs and Sphinxes, the Dryads and Nereids of the classic Walpurgis night.

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In that case, wherein consists the poetry? Wherein lies that something ideal and super-

natural which we feel in Boito's opera, if that phantasmagoric vision of Heaven and Hell, of Antiquity and the Middle Ages, is not evoked by the music, but by the words? Wherein consists the poetry? The poetry of this opera, which treats of necromancers and angels and sirens, lies simply, to my mind, in the something wherein lies also the poetry of that other opera, dealing with deaf papas, flirtatious old spinsters, shop-boys, and runaway marriages: in a very prosaic circumstance—the fact that the music is beautiful.

After which very unpoetical and excessively unphilosophical remark, I had better banish from my mind the melodies both of Boito and of Cimarosa, and take down that volume of "Vorlesungen über die Æsthetik," in which Hegel demonstrates in the most satisfactory manner that music is the art where concern for the form is most completely subordinated to concern for the subject.

# APOLLO THE FIDDLER.

## A

## CHAPTER ON ARTISTIC ANACHRONISM.



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RAISE up and hollow out your two hands, so as to exclude from your eyes all the vague, flickering shadows; so as to concentrate what little light you can upon that luckless unlit fresco over the prison cell window of the Signature Room of the Vatican. At first we can see scarcely anything except the spots of light dancing before our eyes; but gradually the black wall seems to scoop itself out, to deepen, till the mass of blurs take shape, and becomes the ghost-haunted slopes of Parnassus. Vaguely still, and for ever sucked back into the darkness, flickers forth

the company of poets: bearded, regal men, with filleted, gem-like heads, and robed youths with laurel wreaths in their long hair; and the Muses seated with lyre and flute, in gowns of white and green and tawny red; and glimmering white in the midst of all, on the summit of the hill, beneath the straight-stemmed laurels, with the streams bubbling and the flowers opening between his naked feet, King Apollo, seated with his bow in his hand and his fiddle against his cheek. We look, and laugh, and ask ourselves why in the world Raphael should have chosen to paint Apollo as a fiddler? Why indeed? Well, I have a notion that I can explain to you why Raphael painted Apollo as a fiddler, and I will try and expound my idea; but on one condition, that afterwards, in return, we shall do our best to explain why, Apollo having been painted as a fiddler, that circumstance should have made you laugh.

Why Raphael painted Apollo playing,

not upon lyre or cithara, or any other imaginable antique instrument, but upon a fiddle—upon, of all things, the most modern, unantique of instruments, an instrument born of the Middle Ages, and raised to importance only in Raphael's own time—this is a question which has exercised the ingenuity of a variety of ingenious persons. Some have supposed that Raphael wished to indicate that Apollo was not only the god of poetry, but of music; and that he gave him, therefore, in contradistinction to the lyres and citharas and psalteries, instruments used solely to accompany lyrical declamation and therefore symbolical of poetry, handled by the Muses, the one instrument which seemed most purely musical, most disconnected with mere verse recitation—the violin. Others have imagined that the fiddle was placed in the hands of Apollo as a delicate or indelicate piece of favour-currying with some musical minion, some viol-playing page of Pope

Leo X.; perhaps even that same lad, with dark wistful face, and long straight hair, whose portrait Raphael painted, bow in hand, dressed in green velvet and fur. Others have put forward yet other explanations, with which we need not be troubled. Explanations of this sort people have felt bound to make, because the most obvious explanation of all—the explanation of the similar vagaries of Benozzo representing Babylon with Strozzi palaces and Chinese pagodas, of Pinturicchio painting Ulysses returning in the dress of a Sienese man-at-arms to a weaving Penelope apparelled like the lady of any Petrucci, Tolomei, or Piccolomini of his day; nay, of Uccello painting a chameleon as a monster half camel, half lion—the simple explanation of blissful ignorance, cannot go any length to explain the fiddling Apollo of Raphael.

For Raphael was of all men the least likely to be guilty of a sin of ignorance. He was, above any artist of his time, of

the literary, learned, or at least dilettante-learned, temperament. In the vague accounts we obtain of this rather pale-coloured and faintly-drawn man of genius, almost the sole strongly marked characteristic is the noble-patron-of-learning sort of interest, the refined, accomplished, scholarly-gentleman delight in antiquities. It is true that many other artists of the Renaissance had as great, if not greater, a passion for antiques as Raphael, but none, it would seem, from the same reasons. For them the antique was a mere subject of study. If Mantegna spent fortunes, and sold houses and orchards, in order to buy mutilated statues and battered bas-reliefs and half-obliterated coins; it was that to the intense, fantastic master of Mantua these things were as the ores and smelting-ovens of an alchemist. It was that he sought, in the broken, rust-stained marbles, what Leonardo sought in fanciful geometrical problems, and Michael Angelo in dead limbs and

flayed bodies—a sort of magic, omnipotent spell, a sort of ineffable elixir of life—the secret of perfect proportion. But it was not so with Raphael: a student of Tuscan nudities, a dexterous imitator of Michael Angelo, he was yet at bottom an Umbrian, bred in the workshop, the manufactory of disembodied yearning saints, of Perugino; and the antique, although he studied it as he studied everything else, was never to Raphael a supreme teacher or a final problem. His love for all things antique, his constant alacrity to buy or have copied any ancient marbles that came within reach, his anxiety for the preservation of the ancient buildings of Rome, all this was merely the result of a sort of humanistic tendency, a sort of intellectual busybodyness, seeking for a vent in a man of far less literary training than many of his contemporary artists; an interest, in short, academic and archæological, in antiquities for their own sake, such as was shared by his nobler and

more learned friends, Bembo and Castiglione and Sadoleto and Fedra Inghirami, and in less degree by all the poeticules and prelatry of the court of Leo X. Raphael, therefore, cannot be supposed to have been ignorant of the antique instruments which might be placed in the hands of Apollo; nor to have been ignorant (at least for any length of time) of the fact that the fiddle was not an antique instrument. He, who certainly took a vast deal of scholarly advice for his Vatican frescos, who must have heard whole lectures on antique philosophy and poetry before he was able to compose The School of Athens and Mount Parnassus, could not have put a fiddle into the hands of Apollo from the mere stolid ignorance, the happy-go-lucky indifference, which made both Signorelli and an unknown pupil of Squarcione coolly sketch, the one an Apollo, the other an Orpheus, fiddling away in the face of all archæology.

If, therefore, an anachronism was com-

mitted by Raphael, by the preeminently archæological painter, it was certainly not without a motive. No, not exactly a motive, for a motive is self-conscious, and consciously restricted to one particular case. Rather a habit, unconscious and general, influencing in one case because it influenced in all cases. Raphael gave a fiddle to Apollo, not because the giving of the fiddle had any particular meaning in his eyes, but because the giving of the fiddle was consonant with the manner of conceiving subjects which Raphael shared with all the painters of his day; which the painters of his day shared with all the men and women of the Renaissance; and which the men and women of the Renaissance shared with the men and women of ancient Greece, of the Middle Ages, of Elizabethan England, of every country and every time which has possessed a really great and vigorous art—sculpture, painting, poetry, or music: the habit of conceiving of all subjects given to

the artist as the mere material or pretext for a decoration, a show, a pageant; a pageant of sculptured or painted forms, of grouped and linked sounds, of images and emotions; a pageant to pass before the mind, ostensibly to tell some story or honour some person, really merely to delight, even as some great mystery play, with its processions of richly apparelled and grandly mounted soldiers, its cavalcades of mummers and musicians, its companies of singing choristers, its flower-wreathed poles and painted banners and flaring torches, its wheeled stages hung with arras and cressets, and peopled with strangely arrayed figures, may have passed, to do honour to some prince, or to enforce some religious lesson, slowly through the streets of a mediæval city.

To us such a conception of artistic subjects seems far-fetched, artificial, nay, almost impossible; yet it is in reality by far the earlier, the more natural, the more really

artistic. The desire for realizing an already known event, for imitating an already extant character, for placing before the imagination a fac-simile of something existing outside it, or for showing to the bodily eyes what was visible already to the memory; this desire for pitting together the artificial and the natural is, in point of fact, one of very late growth. It did not exist as long as events and characters seemed sufficiently interesting from their more practical bearing; as long as the past was too active a factor in the present and future to require any further reason for remembrance. It could not exist as long as artistic means were fully employed in satisfying men's fancy or expressing men's cravings; it could not exist as long as the artificial and the real were both sufficiently important to dispense with the interest due to comparison between them; nay, such comparison between the reality and the artistic representation required a lazy and

objectless activity of the reason, which was impossible in a time when the reason, overburdened with practical problems, had little leisure for play, and when the artistic cravings and activities were too rigorous to be its passive playthings. Above all, the purely intellectual reasoning enjoyment of watching how far art will differ from nature could not exist as long as the mechanical powers, the powers of responding to the artistic wants of mankind, were still growing in their constant efforts after the yet unaccomplished.

There is in all the art of great periods a sad absence of logic; at least of the logic which we expect. Mere chronicle and mere portraiture put aside, the exposition of an event or of a character is generally embedded in a perfect arabesque of poetical or pictorial digressions. In a play, which is, after all, only the imitation of the manner in which we suppose any given events to have taken place, there is in Antiquity

a series of musical and lyrical interruptions, a series of odes upon extremely indifferent subjects sung at the most critical moments by people who would either not be present, or be thinking of anything rather than choruses; there is in the Elizabethan period a constant arabesquing off into most elaborate lyrical imagery, of digressing into complete chapters of philosophy; all things which we disregard from a sort of inherited familiarity with the style, but which would astonish us greatly if we had never before read anything like "Prometheus Bound" or "Macbeth"; astonish and shock us as much as some intelligent child or peasant would be astonished and shocked by the orchestral preludes, the roulades, the fugues accompanying the conspiracies and murders of our opera stage. Indeed, an opera, with its symphonies, its airs, its quintets and sextets, its choruses, its ballets, its whole tissue of unrealities woven over a few threads of realism, is perhaps the only

artistic form of our day in which we can study the unrealistic, pageant-like art of past times; the only modern thing which can make us realize, with its innumerable incongruities and impossibilities, endured for the sake of mere artistic pleasure, the sort of serious masquerade, the solemn mummery of the plastic and poetic art of former days.

People did not ask for realization; they did not ask to be shown an artistic facsimile of a character or of an event. The public which crowded Blackfriars or the Globe Theatre did not ask for a realization of a tyrant as Becky Sharp is the realization of an adventuress; they did not ask for a realization of a tale of murder as any novel of Emile Gaboriau is its realization: they merely wished to be interested and delighted; and a certain proportion of rough psychologic portraiture, a certain proportion of loosely narrated story, a certain amount of passionate expression, of philo-

sophic rhetoric, of poetic magnificence, of trap-door and magic-lantern horror, did succeed in interesting and delighting them: and the whole strange compound of developed and half-developed elements was called, as the case might be, Macbeth, Hamlet, or the Duchess of Malfy. And the same with painting. The most subtle Florentine public did not ask for a realization of a Scripture story, or an episode in history, as Alma Tadema's "Ave Cæsar," or Morelli's "Raising of Jairus's Daughter," may be considered as realizations of events, as representations of men and women, and place and costume, and look and gesture—of the whole occurrence, in short, such as it probably looked. They were satisfied, the people of the Renaissance, with a figure or two which they could recognize as St. Peter, or St. Paul, or the Proconsul, or the priest of Apollo, with the traditional costume belonging to them, the general expression of exhortation or prayer, or

command or terror, which might convey to their mind some idea of their action; and then they were satisfied that Masaccio or Filippino or Ghirlandaio should surround the whole scene of altercation or of miracle with a group of Greek soldiers, of mediæval men-at-arms, of robed scholars and magistrates, of ladies in brocaded stomachers, and nymphs in antique draperies, of pretty dandies in kilted tunics and striped hose, of people with baskets, and dogs and horses and musical instruments, all looking in no particular direction, with plenty of vine trellises, perspectived streets, peacocks, bas-reliefs or imitation dolmens, with arches of rock overgrown with trees and framing views of towered towns in the distance.

Was it stupidity on the part of the men for whom Shakespeare wrote, of the men for whom Masaccio, or Botticelli, or Signorelli painted? I should not care to tax them with that; or if it were, their stupidity had better results than our wisdom.

I do not think that they had all these things done from mere ignorance or dulness. I think they had merely a different system, a different habit of viewing artistic matters. They did not require that all the items of play or picture should be portions of an organic logical growth, that each part should depend upon another, and the whole produce a single logical impression, any more than, when you make a nosegay or garland, you expect all the flowers and leaves to be homogeneous: lilies do not grow on melon plants, nor poppies on oak leaves; yet as a combination of form and colour, as a decoration, a garland such as the Robbias were wont to imitate in their altar-pieces is certainly preferable to a garland made all of one flower, or of one sort of flower. I have said "as a decoration," and this brings me to the fact that the art of all great periods is, in point of fact, nothing but a decoration; for just as men made their dwellings delightful by stamping

leather with blue and gold patterns (which are certainly not what leather naturally presents) and hanging it on the walls; by weaving the dyed threads of wool and silk into strange figures and devices; by cutting holes into wood and filling them up with bits of ivory or mother-of-pearl; by setting together all manner of various marbles in shapes such as no quarry could ever show; by carving in wood, and painting on plaster, all sorts of shapes, just like enough to beasts and flowers to show that there never was beast or flower like them: as men united together things and forms from all parts of the world and all orders of creation, and altered and assorted them to beautify their houses; so also men took elements of thought and feeling and form, things which delighted the eye, and things which appealed to the fancy, and united them together into quaint and gorgeous arabesques, with which they patterned their lives. And if we consider for a moment, and put aside

all our own habits of considering art as a semi-scientific product, we shall acknowledge how much more natural and spontaneous is such arabesque of form and fancy than our own modern attempt to adorn, to decorate our lives with the museum cases, the rows of pricked and pinned butterflies, and stuffed animals of psychological analysis; to stencil it over with the tables of dates and geological maps of logical realism; whence it is that our lives, for all the attempts we make to adorn them, preserve to the last so dreary a look of schoolrooms and laboratories. Thus we must understand that in the art of the past there is no more logical homogeneousness than in the arabesques of a carved chest or a painted plate; things are juxtaposed and combined with reference only to pleasantness of effect. Hence it is that we constantly meet in the paintings of the Renaissance, and even of the Middle Ages, what appear to us contradictions in

the telling of a story, jumbles of time and place, broken up or hopelessly muddled allegory. But in reality only a fragment of story was expected to be told, only a small amount of unity of time and place to be observed, only a scrap of allegory to be carried through; what seems to us the contradiction, the jumble in story or allegory, no longer belongs to the story or the allegory; is something else, possibly as foreign to them as the miniature angels along the gilded border, or the griffons and satyrs upon the carved frame. These things were not intended to logically coalesce, they merely pictorially harmonized. The gentlemen in furred robes and ladies in high coifs, who knelt at the foot of the cross, the pages holding the caparisoned horses, and the half-naked St. Johns and red-hatted St. Jeromes of Van Eyck's and Memling's pictures were not supposed to be really co-existing with the fainting Virgin, the sobbing Magdalen, the bleeding

Redeemer; the cross was not really supposed to be erected in front of a Dutch castle farmhouse, with fowls cackling by its barn door, palfreys crossing its drawbridges, and ducks swimming in its moat. All this was neither narrative, nor representation, nor allegory, but a little of each and all, combined into one beautiful-looking picture, into one confused, suggestive, moving, delighting pageant of the imagination. For the agony on the cross, the anguish of the Virgin and her attendants, touched people's hearts; the knights and ladies and horses impressed their imagination; the barn-door, the drawbridge, the ducks, the rabbits, the twenty familiar irrelevant details, tickled their fancy; the singing angels sounded delightful; and the whole—to us so incongruous—picture was enjoyed like some great play, in which there is tragedy and comedy, and pastoral and allegory, all mixed together, and the whole effect of which is delightful.

Such, therefore, was the spirit in which even that strangely modern-minded, reasoning, psychological, archæological Raphael must have conceived his works. And in this lies the explanation of that anomaly of the fiddling Apollo. It is difficult to indicate, with however much sense of their unconsciousness and vagueness, the vague, unconscious thoughts and feeling which form the background of all conscious artistic creations. As soon as ever we speak of them they appear definite, conscious; they are no longer the real thing. We can therefore only vaguely suggest the sort of confused conception which Raphael may have had of his Parnassus. In the first place, and of entirely overbalancing importance, the sense of a great piece of pictorial composition—of perspective, drawing, colour, and so forth; then the sense of an allegory of poetry, of personified abstractions; then, again, the sense of certain individuals, of certain personalities—these

two purely intellectual conceptions very much mixed up and entirely driven into the shade, or, more properly speaking, absorbed into the all-important pictorial conception. Thus there would come to be a similar confusion in the conception of the details of the work. There would be an idea of Apollo—of an antique personality, an individual belonging to a definite period of time; then an idea of poetry personified, of poetry in general, modern as well as ancient, not belonging at all to any particular epoch; then again of music, and of music in all probability as something modern—the music which Raphael had heard, not the music which he had not heard. A nebulous, eddying sort of jumble, united, solidified, cast into definite shape by the predominant thought of a young man, a naked young man, a model—yes, seated thus, with his arm thus. The real lad, peasant or colour-grinder, the real, distinct form, fills the mind of Raphael;

he takes a piece of paper and rapidly scrawls a figure, the figure of the boy whom he sees in his memory, whom he sees perhaps as a present reality; quick, the outline of his swaying body, of his firmly planted legs, of his upturned, side-long face; and then—who shall tell how? —from the subsidiary conceptions of the work, from the intellectual notions of his meaning, come his surroundings — the roughly sketched Muses, in antique draperies, belonging to the idea of him as Apollo, as the antique reality; the rapidly indicated figures of the poets—of Father Allighieri and Messer Francesco Petrarca, and perhaps even of Messer Piero Aretino —as part and parcel of the idea of poetry, of poetry in general, old and new, embodied in this youth; and finally, as a recollection of the something musical which enters into the vague whole, there comes into Raphael's head, and emerges from under his pencil, with some recently heard tune starting

suddenly into his memory, the final touch —the fiddle.

So the work is done: the anachronism is committed; yet without either unconsciousness of its being an anachronism, or consciousness of its being one; without either ignorance or absurdity. And when the men of the Renaissance, the prelates and courtiers, the humanists and antiquaries, come and look upon the work, they do not laugh, they do not ask the meaning, they do not question about anything. For in their minds exists the same decorative arabesque as in that of Raphael. An antique god, a personified art, a remembered tune, a bit of narrative of how King Apollo was wont to sit upon Parnassus; a bit of allegory of poets grouped according to their styles and merits, in company with the personified branches of the art; a bit of realism, a recollection of heard music, a fiddle—ideas running confusedly into each other, pleasing, amusing, reminding; above

all, a noble piece of work, a noble group, grandly perspectived, nobly drawn, harmoniously coloured.

But it is different with us; with us who understand so much about all the conditions under which art was produced, and who sympathize with them so little. We come into that prison-like hall of the Signature, we blink and wink in the half-light, we screen our eyes from the shadows, till the frescoed Parnassus gradually emerges from out of the dark wall. We look, appreciate, admire, enjoy (or think we enjoy), and then we laugh. At what? At Apollo, or at his fiddle? Surely not at Apollo. He is but a single figure, very simple and simply worked, not elaborate either in form or in expression, yet perhaps conveying a greater impression of genius than all the dozens of Madonnas, Perugine and Florentine and Roman, than all the great ceremonious allegories like the "School of Athens" and the "Dispute of

the Sacrament," than all the Michelangelesque nudities of the "Burning of the Borgo," with that terrible perfection of drawing and composition and expression, that terrible balance of good qualities, pictorial and psychological, which so often makes Raphael less interesting than many a one-sided, unintelligent little Lombard, or Umbrian, or Venetian. He is but a simple, human-looking god, yet perhaps more poetical, and poetically charming, with his slightly raised young head, singing, quite gently and *sotto voce* as yet, humming over the song he has just composed and will sing anon quite loud and joyous to the Muses—more poetically charming, perhaps, this fiddling Apollo of Parnassus, than almost any marble Apollo of antiquity; than the little Lizard-hunter, a lithe and supple young lizard himself, of Praxiteles; than the young Florentine Apollino, the delicate poet-boy, with hair dressed by some admiring Muse; than the long-robed

laurel-crowned Musagetes of fluttering, half-theatrical inspiration, the divinization of the *improvvisatore*, of the male or semi-masculine Corinne; than the sombre prophetic Pythian (Cassandra's ill-omened lover, certainly) leaning his half-draped chest upon his cithara, wearily pillowing his braided head upon his arm; nay, even than the wizard statue of the Belvedere, which, for all our wiser judgment, for all our archæology and all our knowledge of Elgin marbles, does still give us a little shock of surprise, a little shudder of delight, every time that we, the contemptuous moderns, come face to face with him. No, certainly, we cannot be laughing at Raphael's Apollo. Is it then at the fiddle? But why laugh at the fiddle? There is nothing absurd in a fiddle. If the good Saxon name shock you, call it, if you will, poetically, viol; or musically, violin, tenor, alto—according to the pitch you judge it to have. To the eye the instrument handled by Apollo,

though lacking the subtle curve, the sharp scooped flank of the perfected fiddle of Amati, or Guarneri, or Stradivari, is even in its pre-Cremonese ungainliness more elegant in shape, and much more graceful of manipulation, above all, infinitely finer in tone than any lumbering antique stringed thing. To the imagination, on the other hand, it does not, or need not, present any grotesque images. There is nothing grotesque in the recollection of one of Haydn's quartets or one of Tartini's sonatas; nothing undignified or unpoetical surely in the thought that just such an instrument as this once rested against the moonlit armour, and whined beneath the reddened fingers of Volker the Fiddleman, as he sat with Hagen of Tronegg on the bench outside Queen Chriemhilt's hall, holding watch over the dreadful chamber where Huns and Burgundians lay slaughtered beneath the charred and fallen rafters; nothing unpoetic in the thought that just

such an instrument as this is played on the carpeted steps of the Venetian altar-pieces by the angels at the feet of the Virgin, enthroned in solemn drapery of wine-lee and clove crimson in her tapestried niche, beneath the dangling silver lamps and the garlands of melons and lilies and green leaves slung in heavy festoons. You do not laugh at the fiddle of Morone or Bellini's angels; you do not laugh at the fiddle of the Niebelung knight; you do not laugh at the fiddle for which Hadyn or Mozart composed. Why then laugh at this fiddling Apollo of Raphael's? In reality we are laughing neither at Apollo nor at the fiddle, but at the anachronism, the anomaly of their being thus united—the antique god and the mediæval play-work. We are laughing at the mere name, the droll meeting of incongruous words, "Apollo the Fiddler." And as the name sinks into our mind there crowds forward a vague jumble of grotesque ideas—of

Heinrich Heine's tales of exiled gods, of Bacchus turned convent cellarer, and Jove selling rabbit-skins on Heligoland, and Mercury turned Dutch skipper, with pig-tail instead of winged cap, and knobbed cane instead of Caduceus. Apollo the Fiddler! and there emerges from out of this confusion a vision of Apollo wandering from fair to fair, and from pothouse to pothouse, with his fiddle on his back; of Apollo screwing his pegs and waxing his bow among the clatter of plates and glasses, the cries of water-melon and pumpkin-seed sellers, the gabble of pedlars over their tapes and fans and mirrors, the shuffle and scramble and hum and yell of a village holiday; the vision of the god seated calmly, with dangling legs, on the side of some wooden stage, fiddling away in concert with earthly pipers and drummers until the curtain shall be drawn aside from some mystery play of "Joseph and his Brethren," or "The Three Kings from

the East;" from some grand display of giantesses, or painted negroes, or camels bestridden by wrinkled, red-jerkined monkeys. Why should we be thus haunted by grotesque images? why should we laugh where the men of the Renaissance merely enjoyed? Those humanists surely knew as well as we do what were and were not antique instruments; those men for whom the greatest art was produced surely knew as well as we do what was artistically right and what artistically wrong. Yet we laugh, and they did not. For, as we have already seen, those men did not let their knowledge of how things are or have been in reality, interfere with their enjoyment of how things are represented in art; they designed ornaments where we only label specimens; they did not habitually and perpetually, almost unconsciously and automatically, judge of all things from a scientific point of view.

From a scientific point of view? This

assertion takes you somewhat aback, does it not, my friend? You, at least, you imagined, were safe from such an imputation. For you happen to be peculiarly unscientific, particularly artistic. You are (and not without a little pride thereat in your heart of hearts) a person whose artistic and imaginative nature is for ever being ruffled by the scientific spirit of the age. You hate all explanation, analysis; you recoil, almost as from some gritty or clammy contact, from the theories which attempt to explain your likings and dislikings; you are, even by your own confession, just a trifle cowardly in the presence of ideas and facts; you wish merely to feel and imagine, and to keep the luxurious sense of mystery and wonder. You are proudly conscious that your real home was not modern London, but ancient Athens or mediæval Florence; and being thus cruelly exiled into a land of desolation, you strive to build out of all manner of frag-

ments of beauty and fancy, and fashion, out of all manner of broken-down, long-inherited sounds and sights and images, some sort of retreat, half hermitage, half-pleasure dome, where your soul can loll at its ease, secluded, peaceful, high above the smoke and smut and rattle of modern ideas. You have, in short, a vague, uncomfortable, instinctive aversion to science. And yet you, even you, are in this case, and in a thousand similar cases, judging and even condemning art from the point of view of science.

When we say science, we must define. There is science of all kinds, and some kinds have no possible chance of intruding into the domain of art. And, strange to say, these latter happen to be the very sciences you dislike most: those physical sciences, physiology, optics, acoustics, which teach other folk (for you decline being taught) why certain linear forms by requiring a painful adjustment of the visual

muscles, and certain colour combinations by causing an excess of stimulus to the retinal nerves, and certain sequences and meetings of sounds by disintegrating with opposed movements the delicate mechanism of hearing, give us, each in its way, an impression called ugliness; while certain other combinations of lines, of colours, and of sounds, induce the pleasurable sense of beauty: these natural sciences, which thus impertinently and coarsely explain the causes of artistic likings, do not attempt to influence those likings and dislikings themselves. For art deals only with the very surface of Nature; with that which she reveals to the naked eye and the unaided ear, with the combinations which require for their perception neither scalpel nor alembic nor logical mechanism of analysis. Our artistic sense of right and wrong is safely based in the structure of our organism, which science may explain, but which science cannot replace. It is

from no knowledge of cell or tissue, of bone or muscle, of anything inside the human body, that we know when that body is comely and when it is uncouth. Our perception of line and colour, perhaps a collateral sense of weight and resistance, perhaps even a long engrained, long unanalytic, long instinctive, nay, automatic sense of fitness for the purposes of life—all these various senses, combined into what we call artistic perception, taught the Greek sculptors where to seek models for Aphrodite or Apollo long before the first profane knife had ever pried into the mysteries hidden beneath the mere grand curves, the supple broken lines, the beautiful surface of the human body. Knowledge of beauty, knowledge of the fair shapes and tints of man, and beasts, and plants, and rocks, and skies; knowledge of the sweet harmonies or melodies to be got out of pipe, or string, or throat—knowledge of beauty, though knowledge, most indis-

putably, is no more scientific knowledge than is the knowledge of virtue or vice. Science, with its analysis, can teach us what hidden reasons of physical benefit or injury, of social progress or degradation, have made us such as to prefer beauty to ugliness, good to evil; but science was not born when our remotest ancestors already preferred beauty to ugliness, good to evil, and thought that the preference, the knowledge, was the pressure of some guiding angel's hand, the mysterious voice of some unseen divinity. This sort of science, therefore, physical and physico-mental, which explains the functions by the structure and the structure by the function of things, has therefore no power of meddling with art; for the sculptor knows before the anatomist when a limb is misshapen; and the musician has perceived that a chord is insupportable long before the physicist can begin analyzing his air waves.

No; it is not those coarse matter-of-fact physical sciences which can and do impertinently interfere with art. It is those far vaguer, less scientific sciences, historical and geographical, which with their charm of colour and incident, their stimulus to fancy and emotion, have become one of the luxuries of your life, making you forget almost that they are sciences at all; as in some picturesque museum, where furniture and plate are grouped into habitable rooms, and armour and musical instruments look as if only now thrown aside; or in some great greenhouse, where spreading palms and huge ferns hide the glass and ironwork, and flowering parasites half impede the way, you may forget that all these things are so many scientific spoils, so many specimens collected and arranged by historian or geographer.

These geographic and historic sciences, which you look upon as if they were scarcely sciences at all, have in reality no connection

whatever with our perceptions of beauty and ugliness; their range of explanation does not contain any of the phenomena of artistic preference. As the physical sciences explain the structural reasons of our pleasure or displeasure at certain artistic forms, so the geographico-historical sciences explain why given countries and ages have produced one kind of artistic form rather than another. The one set of sciences explains the impression being received by the spectator; the other set of sciences explains that impression being conveyed by the artist. But the geographico-historical sciences, which teach us that the Greeks modelled beautiful naked figures because they greatly practised athletic exercises; and that the Venetians were excellent colourists because they lived in sea-marsh land and traded with the East; these geographico-historic sciences approach less near to the real artistic problems of right and wrong than do those physical sciences that teach us, that owing to

the configuration of our eye, the bosses of Greek sculpture and the tints of Venetian draperies are specially agreeable to us. Yet, while physiology, optics, acoustics, never venture upon interfering in our artistic judgments; the geographico - historical sciences, which cannot even explain the physical basis of our artistic impressions, are for ever stepping in and telling us that in a picture, a statue, or an opera, this, that, or the other is right or wrong. Nay, it is they, these irrelevant sciences of date and place, which, while our artistic preceptions are perfectly delighted, will cry out that we ought to condemn some anachronism; it is they which, in the midst of our admiration for Raphael's Parnassus, evoke that whole procession of ludicrous images, and burst out laughing at the Fiddling Apollo.

Yes; and they have made us laugh at many other things. At Mozart and Rossini's Romans and Assyrians singing roulades and declaiming accompanied by or-

chestral flourishes, like so many Corydons and Chloes, in the Forum or at Nineveh; they will make us laugh at half the paintings of the Renaissance; they may make us laugh some day at Shakespeare's jumble of Athenian dukes and London tradesmen and fairy-land fairies. The laughing is, however, the least harm they have done; for, after all, when we have laughed at Raphael or Mozart or Shakespeare, we are still obliged to enjoy and to admire. We are not smitten blind or deaf for our sacrilege; and the great artists are avenged by our ignominiously returning to the very things we scorned. But our scientific habits, our habits of always knowing how and when and where everything happened, have made us believe that it is a special mission of modern art to make up for the anachronisms and anomalies of former days by becoming in a way the illustrator, with colours, sounds, and words, of the reality of things as we now suppose it to have been. His-

torical painting, which in former days had nothing whatever to do with history, and calmly presented us with Romans and Egyptians and Hebrews in slashed jerkins and pointed shoes, has in our time become historical in all good sooth; poetry, which used to put into the hearts and mouths of men and women of distant countries and bygone ages the passions and words of the poet and his own contemporaries, now elaborates and studies and imitates sentiments which we fortunately can no longer even conceive, words of which the real sense has happily grown obsolete to us. Nay, music, which would seem the most ungeographic and unhistorical of all arts, has succeeded, as critics tell us, in giving us "historic opera;" and even, as an enthusiastic Frenchman declared about the "Aïda" of Verdi, in delighting us no longer with mere empty melodies and harmonies, but with the vision of ancient Egypt, with its pyramids and mummies, its priests and its warriors, its

desert sand and Nile mud, and all the mysteries of its mixed mysterious races. All this may seem exaggeration, and indeed, when such aims and pretensions are distinctly formulated, there are few of us in whom they will not occasion a smile. Yet in point of fact we are constantly acting and judging according to these ideas; painters turn their studios into perfect museums, and wander all over Syria and Egypt before attempting some subject which to Michael Angelo or Leonardo would have presented nothing beyond a problem of anatomy or of light and shade. Musicians collect and print huge volumes of the rude chants of distant peoples and times, in order that composers, when on the point of writing an opera, may know exactly where to look for the proper local colour. And as to poets—have they not turned of late into perfect rhymed Michelets and Froudes, requiring for their proper criticism no longer literary critics, but keepers of State Records?

What harm is there in all this? you may ask. Granting its uselessness, is it not a mere amusing mania? Not so; and for several reasons. First, because art must suffer in its essentials as soon as it is made subservient to some extra-artistic interest; because all this elaborate doing of things scientific prevents the simple doing of things artistic. For when a painter, well versed in Oriental realities, has made of what some ignoramus of Florence or Venice or Antwerp would have made into a grand display of beautiful figures, faces, and draperies, a something closely resembling, in its rows of flopping, veil-muffled, and shawl-huddled Egyptians or Syrians, a number of clothes bags in process of being emptied, the art of painting and the æsthetical cravings of mankind are not very much the gainers thereby. When a musician introduces into an opera elaborate imitations of the music of centuries and peoples who had no real music at all, his work is not much improved

thereby. Worst of all, when a poet has reproduced effects, modes of thought and feeling, he has not only given us things with which neither he nor his reader can sympathise, but he has at the same time cheated us of the expression of his own and our real emotions, which, in their quivering reality, can force the sympathy even of men to whom these emotions may have grown obsolete and strange. But this is not all: in thus attempting to make art the mere illustrator of science, we shall in the first place violate the inherent organic conditions of art; and then, as sole reward, give it, in exchange for the stability and imperishableness of artistic form, the fluctuating, changing impersonality of scientific fact. For, with regard to the nature of art itself, we must remember, or understand, what daily observation ought long since to have impressed upon us, that there is as complete an organic necessity in the sequence of style upon style and form upon form as

there is in the sequence of the seasons of the year and their respective products, or in the growth of the child into the youth and the youth into the man; and that thus all spontaneous, really vital and valuable art must always present a certain homogeneousness of form and character, a certain limitation in its capacities, which prevents the adoption of the forms and characters of another time or another place: for art, to be good, or rather when art is good—that is to say, when art is vital—men can imagine, write, paint, only the things which they see and feel, men can work only in the style which belongs to their race and to their generation: to ask, therefore, for a correct expression or imitation of feelings, fancies, or forms of other races and other generations, is simply to demand what no art in its vital condition, in its condition of really valuable function, can by any possibility give. And could living art thus become the scientific reproducer of efforts,

feelings, and forms, could any art worthy of the name exchange its own powers of satisfying our æsthetic wants, for the power of bringing home to us some scientific fact, some conception of distant or long-ended things; could it do this, what would be its reward? We have spoken of the stability and imperishableness of artistic form as contrasted with the fluctuating, changing impersonality of scientific fact: this phrase may have seemed to some an impertinence, to others an absurdity. Yet if we look into matters, we shall have to confess the truth (a bitter truth to the mere critic) that no purely scientific works can ever live, that no purely scientific book can ever continue to be read, that only artistic excellence endures.

For the man of science, be he naturalist or ethnologist or metaphysician, gives only a certain number of new facts, or a certain magnitude of new system; his successor inherits those facts and that system—increases

the one, enlarges the other; so that the second comer is always the richer and more valuable than the first, and the third than the second. The most valuable scientific book is necessarily the most recent, because it contains all the truth contained in its predecessors, and more, and also less error. The books of the very greatest scientific minds of the past are now read only by specialists studying the development of some particular science or idea. Harvey discovered the circulation of the blood, Newton gravitation, Smith the relations between price and supply and demand. Nothing can diminish their glory for having discovered those facts, but those facts no longer belong exclusively to them: they have been developed, corrected by others, and can be found elsewhere than in their books, and found more complete than in them. We venerate these men, but we do not read their books. If we want to know about gravitation, or about supply and demand, we turn, not to the "Prin-

cipia" or to the "Wealth of Nations," but to the most recent text-book of physics or political economy by some living mediocrity. The same fate awaits Helmholtz, Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, and all the discoverers of facts or laws. We all talk of Descartes, yet how wretchedly poor does not his great book appear to us! mere truisms which we knew before we were born. The same applies to Vico, to Montesquieu, to all those who have revolutionized thought. The man who made the very first plough was certainly one of the most ingenious of mortals, yet who would care to use such an instrument? and who would care to employ Stephenson's first railway engine, or Arkwright's first loom? Yet their makers were men of genius, while the makers of the latest, most desirable improvements in engines and looms may be mere craftsmen. Now the case is immediately changed as soon as the place of the relative elements, truth and usefulness, is taken by the positive

element beauty. For a truth is assimilated and grows, an invention is assimilated and grows; but a work of art, when once beauty has been attained, does not grow. You may repeat and re-repeat, and alter and re-alter it; you may destroy it, but you cannot develop it: its value is positive; time passes, and it is as delightful to the man of the nineteenth century as it was to the man of the fifth century before Christ. If you would benefit by what was done by Homer, by Shakespeare, by Phidias, Michael Angelo, or Mozart, you must have recourse to themselves. No addition can be made to their works; and it is noteworthy that the only books which are permanently reprinted are books of mere *belles-lettres*, which may be four thousand years old; the only objects which are constantly being copied, without attempt at alteration, are not useful mechanisms, but works of art. You may take a plaster cast of a statue of the time of Pericles; but who would care

to have an exact fac-simile of a revolver made twenty years ago? If scientific works continue to be read, it is because the element of eternity, the element of beauty, has entered into them; the scientific ideas may be old, but the artistic forms are not. We may know more of philosophy than Plato, or Bacon, or Pascal, but we have not got the power of writing as they did. And if any modern historian or philosopher be read two hundred years hence, it will be not as a man of science, but as an artist. A consolation this, and a great one, for nowadays much of what artistic instinct remains is taking refuge in critical writing. Our men of thought and research, Ruskin, Michelet, Carlyle, will be known as great artists to future generations, which will have let the memory of many of our artists die out as that of mere obsolete and mistaken men of science.

We have wandered a good way from our original starting-point, and some of you

may ask, What has all this to do with Raphael's Apollo? We started with asking ourselves how it came about that a learned man like Raphael, an artist above all his contemporaries, studious, thoughtful, nay, archæological, should have deliberately committed the anachronism of placing a fiddle in the hands of Apollo. We found that, in so doing, Raphael had merely followed the habit of his time, which considered artistic representation in a manner quite different from ours. And, proceeding to examine our own manner of viewing art and its functions, we found that, on the whole, the old way, which at first seemed to us so childish, illogical, and far-fetched, was simpler, more natural, and more efficacious than our own; that perhaps the illogical men of the Renaissance had more sense of artistic logic, of the logic of keeping everything to its right place and work, than we have; and that there is more anomaly in painting archæological pictures, writing

historical tragedies, and composing geographical operas, than there was in showing Apollo among the Muses and Poets, fiddling away on the summit of Parnassus.

# THE IMMORTALITY OF THE MAESTRO GALUPPI.



# THE IMMORTALITY OF THE MAESTRO GALUPPI.

IN the month of August seventeen hundred and seventy, Baldassare Galuppi, surnamed *Il Buranello*, chapelmaster of St. Marks, director of the music school of the *Incurabili*, with thirty odd years of glory around him, ushered the enthusiastic Dr. Burney into his little study, and, pointing to the desk and spinette, said modestly, "This is where I dirty paper."

We can imagine the laughter, beatifically sonorous, of the English enthusiast; the laughter also, somewhat less beatific and sonorous, of the Venetian admirers, who had probably heard that modest little joke many

times and oft; the smile of that good and illustrious little old man, the grand bows sweeping the floor with the three-cornered hat, all those ceremonious antics which disappeared with the "Your slave, sir!" and similar politenesses which we know from Goldoni. We can see the whole little comedy of enthusiasm and modesty on the threshold of that writing-closet, with the spinette in the background, the furniture painted over with nosegays, and the window opening on the canal; the lilac and pea-green coats, and black gowns, and bob-wigs and pigtails; a little picture for Pietro Longhi.

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Affectation, all this; little coquetries of a man accustomed to success, you will say. Likely enough. Still it would please me to believe that in those words of the good Galuppi, there had been a grain of sincerity. In that man, who felt himself growing old, and saw a lot of youngsters coming up

(Sacchini, for instance, Sarti and Paisiello, youngsters now, alas, forgotten by the oldest great-grandfather), in that man, I say, there might really have been a certain diffidence; or at least that suspicion which must come to old people, and ought to be chronic in the artists of the most ephemeral of all arts, that one day all those precious scores, now furtively fingered by enthusiasts prying about the writing-table and the spinette, may become, in the eyes of posterity, a mere heap of ruled paper, once white, now dirty, and fit only for the chandler's or the archive.

And bearing this in mind, I incline to believe that the Maestro Galuppi, who struck people as a modest and sincere little man, may really have entertained some doubts concerning his own immortality. In which case the Maestro Galuppi was decidedly mistaken. The gods, and more especially their earthly representatives, municipal councillors and mayors, are always friendly to genius, neither

do they allow it to be *drowned in the black waters of Lethe*, as people would have said in the days of Galuppi.

O genius, mysterious, perennial and supreme emanation of the divine; more powerful than ease, or pleasure, or vanity, or rapacity, or whatsoever baseness is nurtured in the human heart; genius which upraisest our soul more than virtue, and shakest it more than love, and draggest it along more irresistibly than beauty, making us soar up to heaven at the moment of kneeling on the earth; genius, thou also canst turn into children the most villainous sceptics; and turn into poets, poets of the great poetry which is not written nor printed but lived, the respectable creatures whose ideal consists in two thousand a year.

Of course we often attempt to deny it, as we would deny all loftier things, this despotic power of genius. But it is useless. Have I not seen and heard an ex-hotel-keeper, mayor of a small watering-place,

wax enthusiastic on hearing that Shelley had once spent two months in that place, and exclaim with childlike triumph—"Yes, we'll find out that house! we'll find it out; and we'll put up a marble slab with the inscription—Here lived and wrote the illustrious So-and-so"?

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The crowd of half-naked raggamuffins, after having dogged us along the quays and across the square of Burano, rushes in after the gondola, which seeks vainly with the strength of both oars, to emerge from that shallow, greenish, slimy water, paved with potsherds, and now pullulating with those little human frogs, brown, yellow-headed, with their formidable glancing of white teeth and shrill vociferations—"Paron, Paron, ghe no me lasa una pa' anca." A handful of coppers whips across the water, and all those heads duck, with a simultaneous yell. The gondolier on the stern bows himself outward, leaning with all his

might on the oar; and the gondola, once out of the shallow, glides quickly across the violet wavelets of the lagoon.

Our eyes remain fixed on the island, smaller with every stroke of the oars, but, owing to that curious autumnal limpidity of the lagoons, not yet dimmed by the distance. The light, reflected by the shining mirror of water, strikes vividly upon the white or pink plaster of the battered houses, the orange of the tiles, the exquisite rose colour of the belfry that seems almost to sway, like the stalk of a flower, in the blue of the sky. The red and the white of the walls and brickwork, even that transparent pale blueness of sky, acquire in that light I know not what feathery, flaky, powdery look of being immaterial and unreal; as if those houses, those cupolas and belfries, those tall urn-shaped chimneys, were an intangible pastel, so much whitish and lilacky dust upon pink drawing-paper, rather than solid things

of this solid world; so much so that the image mirrored in the lagoon seems more concrete than the real houses and real churches under the real sky.

Across the water there comes from Burano the sound of bells, the braying of the band in the principal square. For there are grand doings at Burano, and the fishing smacks, with their tawny sails furled and their brown nets hung out in the sun, are moored side bv side in the little port, with no one to heed them save the usual cur barking all day and all night. At the doors of the black kitchens, where brass and copper trenchers and pails shine out in the gloom, are seated the old women, sibyls or fates for Michelangelo, and the old fishermen wearing the scarlet condottiere's cap of the Renaissance, wrinkled and furrowed living terra-cottas and bronzes enough to make Donatello and Pollajolo gnash their teeth for envy. The old folk are surrounded by swarming little ones,

beautiful creatures, more than half-naked, rolling about with the dogs and cats in the heaps of broken crockery, of tomato skins and pumpkin shells which form spots of vivid colour (and alas, of vivid stench) at the corners of the black lanes and on the steps of the dull green canals. While on the quays and in the square there moves the compact crowd of black or auburn heads of hair with hat on one side; of flowered cotton frocks pulled up to show the red stocking and the black clog, of veils and kerchiefs which hide, only the better to display, blond waves of hair and dark eyes; of red fans held up by sun-burnt hands; with here and there the tri-colour plumes of the carabineers. And above it all, red and green spots upon the white of the houses, the blue of the sky, are the flags flying from the windows, the lanterns strung up for the illumination. The bells jangle: the band brays. The crowd shuffles, jostles, laughs, and swears;

the vendors of fresh water and fried pumpkin, of candies spitted on wooden skewers, yell the praise of their wares. At the end of the square is a house with an extra amount of flags and lanterns, where gentlemen in tall hats are speechifying in good Italian, which nobody understands. The crowd laughs and swears; the band plays the duet of *Ruy Blas*, the potpourri of *Aïda*, and the royal march; the bells jangle louder than ever from the red belfry. The festivities are a grand success. Capital speeches have been made; a capital banquet will be given, with capital toasts; telegrams will be sent out in all directions —to Venice, to Rome, to the Minister of Public Instruction, to the Maestro Verdi, to everybody and anybody.

And all this fuss merely to commemorate the fact that a hundred and eighty years ago "there saw the light"—as the biographies have it—"in Burano, an humble island of the lagoon," a certain man called Baldassare Galuppi.

After this would you have me believe that immortality is not always the reward of genius?

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Have you ever thought over the fate of forgotten melodies?

Our mind, if we attempt, proves unable to conceive of all those thousands and thousands of combinations of notes which were heard once upon a time, and are now heard no longer. Gone, disappeared. And whither? Vanished totally, like the sunset redness of yesterday, or last year's roses. The roses return, and so does the reddening sunset; but these other things, that were as lovely as they, do not. They have ceased to exist along with the recollection of the men and women in whose mind they had their sole real existence. The thought is strange and difficult to grasp. Yet there is something stranger still, and more difficult for our weak imagination to realize. It is the thought of all the minds

in which those melodies were once re-echoed; of all the hearts which, swept by them, shivered with pleasure or pain; of all that life, in short, which is now dead; of that present which has become the past, and by whose side, even while we are listening to the songs of to-day, there noiselessly takes its place this present of our own, becoming itself the past. The other arts, architecture, painting, sculpture, remain; besides they are always, so to speak, external to our life. Music alone exists absolutely in us who listen; nay, it has no existence apart from ours; and hence it is that music, like ourselves, must die.

That gallows-bird Villon, perhaps the first man to understand a certain kind of modern sentiment, wrote, as you know, an immortal ballad, in which he asked what had become of the famous women, the great empresses, and courtesans, and saints of former days, the ballad of dead ladies, whose melancholy refrain is an unanswer-

able question, "Mais où sont les neiges d'antan?"

As to me, I have often thought, that were I poet I would write a ballad sadder, sweeter, and more sceptical even than Villon's, which I should call the ballad of dead tunes.

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Let your thoughts rest on it for a moment. There are two airs, for instance, neither of which a hundred years old, yet how forgotten: Cimarosa's *Quelle Pupille Tenere* and *Di Tanti Palpiti* in Rossini's Tancred; pieces once sung and whistled in every house and street through the length and breadth of Italy. Think what is meant by these pieces having once been familiar on all lips and in all ears, while now there is not one person in a thousand that knows their tune; in the case of Cimarosa's song, not one in a hundred thousand, since it has not had the luck, like *Di Tanti Palpiti*, of turning into a

singing exercise for young ladies with a contralto voice. It means not only the death of the melodies themselves, of so much beauty, individuality, pleasure; but the death also of so many men and women who knew and loved those songs; the total severing of all tradition between ourselves and them. And thinking on this, I cannot but feel a great pathos about those two airs which have in them nothing pathetic. In those sighing horns of *Tancred* (before the famous phrase "mi rivedrai, ti rivedrò"), in those shrilling trumpets that accompany the song of Cimarosa, there is for me a whole peal of Requiem bells. Yet these songs are but two; behind, around them, how many forgotten songs? thousands and thousands; their ranks to be swelled by the melodies alive to-day. And thus on till the consummation of centuries.

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I am haunted by this thought, returning

at sunset from those centenary festivities in honour of Galuppi, at which not a bar of Galuppi's music was to be heard. A melancholy fact? Nay, rather one to laugh about: the thing is too comic to have the dignity of sadness.

Immortality: well, if he wanted immortality, that good man of the eighteenth century, why he has got it. A commemorative slab was stuck on to his house to-day.

The sun has set behind a bank of ashy mist without any sunset glory. Burano is many miles behind us; and in front, grey upon the greyness of the waters, rises the faint profile of Venice, with its long serpentine lines of posts in the lagoon. All is grey; the water, the sky, the distant city, the yet more distant hills. But little by little there mingles with that greyness, in long cloud filaments in the sky, in wide patches like rose leaves on the water, a pale, palest rosiness. It is the colour of the dead melodies.

And while my eyes wander over the lagoon where the rose colour dies away in the grey, there sings in my memory a certain phrase of melody of exquisite beauty; and that phrase is part of Buranello's setting of the words, "Se cerca, se dice." A melody found in a dusty portfolio in an archive, known therefore, perhaps, only by me. The thought is curious. Is it sad? Sad; but not without a certain something that pleases. Yes; I admit it: I am better pleased that this air should not be known to the good people at the festivities of Burano, nor to others. I alone know it. And I let it sing through my memory, while watching the faded rose colour that dies in the greyness of the sky and the greyness of the lagoon; the colour, as I said, of the forgotten songs.





# PERIGOT:

## RANDOM NOTES ON THE DRAMATIC AND UNDRAMATIC.



# PERIGOT:

## RANDOM NOTES ON THE DRAMATIC AND UNDRAMATIC.

### I.

In a recent article on Fletcher's "Faithful Shepherdess," we were told by a lady well versed in pastoral literature, and, moreover, connected in a very close and singular way with the pastoral world, that the shepherd Perigot was certainly a small peasant proprietor. While gratefully acknowledging, as a disciple of the late Stuart Mill, the importance of this testimony in favour of small farming; and while bowing before Lady Archibald Campbell's theoretical studies and personal experience in such

matters, I feel bound to state that I disagree entirely with her views. And I can explain the divergence in our opinions upon this subject only by the fact that the lady in question could not have had, for obvious reasons, the very great advantage, upon which I rest my claims to a theory, of being among the audience at the performance of Fletcher's pastoral comedy last summer in Coombe Park.

I deny, therefore, utterly and categorically, that the shepherd Perigot is, or ever has been, a small peasant proprietor; indeed, I resent that supposition as an offence of *lèse*—it is rather difficult to find the word —well, of *lèse-Perigot*, which is the same as saying an offence of *lèse*-fancy. For Perigot, I repeat, never has been a small peasant proprietor. Allow me to tell you something about him. Perigot is a prince, a prince of royal lineage more ancient than any other (of the dim ancestry of Khan Kubla, perhaps), sprung in directest line

from some Greek god showering and shimmering down in a golden fountain, or sailing majestic with shining white wings and snake-like erect head among the reeds and water-lilies. Perigot is a prince who, owing to some frightening dream or some lowly love affair, or perhaps merely because the thyme and marigolds of the hill-side, the shadow of the plane trees by the river, are pleasanter than the pillared palace chambers, possesses a flock which browse all day while he makes songs, as the Tuscan shepherds do even nowadays, with the names of flowers and herbs and the name of his sweetheart. Perigot is a prince; he has golden fringes to his green tunic, and a silver fillet round his blond hair; he may, at any moment, lay aside the fleece he wears on his shoulders, the shepherd's staff and pipe, in order to leap, with silver greaves and high-crested helmet, into his chariot with the golden spokes; or to mount upon his horse with the ivory

saddle and the long cloth of gold cover, a tame lynx in leash and a falcon on his wrist. For there is this of strangeness in Perigot, that, being so very, very young, he is also so very, very old. Paris of Troy was his elder brother; and his younger brother is the dear little king from the East, fair and smooth, with the long narrow eyes and long narrow smile, whose pomegranate embroidered mantle was unbuckled from his shoulders, and his golden spurs unstrapped, and his big sword held by a negro page, that he might kneel and proffer the incense and myrrh without frightening the little child in the stable at Bethlehem. Perigot is still without even the first faint callowness of lip or chin; yet he is older by far than the oldest greybeard. He has flown with the winged sandals of Perseus over the blue seas and white cities of Greece; he has ridden with Oberon's horn by his ride through the mysterious pine woods, along the strangely winding

rivers of the kingdom of the Grail King; he disappeared out of Antiquity as the boy Hylas whom the green-haired nymphs dragged beneath the river bed; and he reappeared in the Middle Ages as the Provençal knight Aucassin, "Aucassin li Biax, li Blons, li Gentil, li Amoureux." He has appeared again in later times, a boy or a girl? A girl disguised as a boy, or a boy disguised as a girl? as Richardet in the clothes of his sister Bradamante, as Viola in the dress of her brother Sebastian; showing himself, all the while, to country folk, old women and children, as the third son who cut off the Ogre's head, who kissed the dreadful Snake-lady, who broke off the bough of the Apples That Sang, and filled his flask with the Water That Danced. And once more—the last time, alas! we may fear—he has shown himself in our own days, on the stage of turf and cut grass, between the side scenes of rustling elms, of the pastoral theatre at Coombe.

He, undoubtedly he, among the crowd of graceful little masquerade figures, girls and youths copied from Alma Tadema or Albert Moore, hurrying with a sort of childish charm through Fletcher's big-mouthed verses; running in and out of the bushes like children playing at hide-and-seek, mottling the green distances of the forest glades with bright spots of yellow and lilac and blue garments, like a glorified school treat, and joining hands and dancing round the shrine of Pan, like the dear little people in Kate Greenaway's toy-books. Among this delightful, very visibly got up, very visibly modern troop of shepherds and shepherdesses, which crowded beneath the elms at Coombe, Perigot appeared, wholly different from all the rest, a reality in his thorough unrealness, no part of the masquerade. Unmistakable from the moment that he descended from his bullock wain (by-the-way the bullocks wore pony harnesses, probably unknown

in Arcadia), among the acclamations of the pastoral folk, to the moment when the curtain closed upon him standing by his shepherdess; unmistakable every time that he came forward, like a Botticelli allegoric youth, with vague wide-opened eyes and vague distant smile; every time that he walked slowly away, tall, slender, with the charming line of slightly bowed head and shoulders; unmistakable by virtue of that strange, half-feminine, half-boyish charm, that far-fetched, exotic, almost artificial grace which belongs to all creatures who have come out of Antiquity and lived through the Middle Ages; that strange and subtle quality of being an unreality and an enigma. Perigot himself, undoubtedly, come back to the world, re-embodied to play his own part among a troop of amateur shepherds and shepherdesses, as Wilhelm Meister half imagined that the real ghost of King Hamlet might come back to play his part by the side of Aurelia and Serlo and Philine. Was

it wise? Was it judicious of this Prince of Fairyland and Shepherddom, this brother of Paris and of the King from the East, this creature who had been Hylas and Aucassin, this boy thousands of years old, to give way to the temptation of re-incarnating once more? I fear not; I fear very much that it was foolish: for has not a lady very learned in pastoral lore, and who, of all people, might most have suspected this curious avatar mystery that was going on, declared, in print, that Perigot was a small peasant proprietor? After that, let the gods never re-incarnate again, nor the fairy princes.

## II.

The incarnation of the unreal is not for our age of realism; of realism to a far greater extent even than we are generally apt to think. For realism has been steadily growing for the last two hundred years.

The last two hundred? The last three or four—nay, perhaps the last four thousand years. I take the word realism in the sense neither of Ruskin nor of Zola, as connected neither with humble love of nature nor with a hankering after filthy things. By realism I mean simply the observation of things as they are, the familiarity with their aspect, physical and intellectual, and the consequent faculty of reproducing them with approximate fidelity. And when I say that realism has been growing in the last two, three, four hundred, or four thousand years, I simply mean that the longer mankind has been in the world, the better acquainted does mankind become with the world's contents; passing, in its various stages of familiarity, from the observation of such details as it knows, to the observation of such further details as it does not know. For just as children learn but gradually to group their sensations, to recognize combinations of such sensations

and to perceive form, distance, position, and cause and effect, so mankind also learns but slowly the aspect of outer things, the nature of inner ones, the possibilities and impossibilities of the universe. And this is a process which, with the partial interruption due to loss of time and accumulated material in what we call the Middle Ages, has been steadily going on. We must not be misled by the fact that this realistic tendency, this gradual familiarity with things, has frequently shifted its ground. The Greeks of the days of Phidias indubitably possessed a familiarity with the line and boss of the human figure, a degree of realization in such matters, which was not increased, but rather diminished in after times; but the Greeks were unfamiliar with the medium, all that falls under the head of colour, light, and perspective, in which this human figure exists. They saw Nature, as distinguished from man, very vaguely and superficially, as we see a country in which we find our-

selves for the first time, lacking interest in it and unable to reproduce any very clear notion thereof. Thus, in the matter of background, colour, light and shade, atmosphere and perspective, in what constitutes the peculiar field of the painter as distinguished from the sculptor, an enormous realistic movement took place throughout the Middle Ages, vague and idealistic as we are apt to conceive them. Similarly, we think of the century and a half that lies between Milton and Cowper as a century of unfamiliarity with Nature, of what, in our aversion for the stereotyped phrases about "nodding groves," "hoary mountains," and similar Grub Street descriptions of scenery, we call conventionalism. Yet during that century and a half a vast progress was achieved in the direction of realization of the inner life of men and women —nay, in some measure, even of their outer life; Defoe, Addison, Richardson, Fielding, Madame de Lafayette, and the

Abbé Prévost are the contemporaries of Dryden, Pope, Thomson, and those various French rhymsters who sang of "*des ris et des jeux folâtres, des appas et des graces*," but could not tell a beech from a chestnut. Thus, I maintain, there has constantly been, and there inevitably could only be, an increase of familiarity—that is to say, of the desire and power of realizing the existing—in some portion of man's relations with himself or with external things.

To return to my simile of the child, all the literature of past ages gives us, in some extraordinary blindness of the humanly possible, in some astonishing change of character or inconceivable obtuseness, the equivalent of that want of perception of what is and what is not, which makes the child try to sweep the moon out of the sky with a broom. Thus Oliver, in "As you Like It," could not have suddenly turned from an utter scoundrel into a fit husband for Celia; nor could Olivia, in "Twelfth

Night," have instantly married off an unknown brother of the person she was in love with, on discovering that person to be a woman. Such things are impossible, due to absolute carelessness, want of habit of realizing situations; they are as utterly silly and childish as to stick three rosebuds and a box sprig into the ground and call the arrangement a garden. But I shall have to speak again, a little later, of similar peculiarities of the Shakspearian stage.

Be this as it may, we who are the latest comers have inherited all these various powers of seeing things as they are, and reproducing them faithfully; and to this inheritance of manifold realisms we people of the nineteenth century have added all the more liberally, because we have had to spontaneously begin realizing in no one single category of literature or art. Hence we have surrounded ourselves with what has never existed before—a complete circle of realism: in painting, in whatever there

still is of vital belonging to sculpture, even in poetry; above all, in that which is our own special form of art, the novel. And thus our stage, also, has become absolutely realistic.

I am not speaking merely of the extraordinary fidelity to reality in dress and scenery, which would have amazed our grandfathers, to whom it seemed quite proper that conspiracies should be discussed in the tyrant's ante-chamber, and that Greeks and Romans, Crusaders and Turks, should all appear with the same curly wigs, knee-breeches, corslets, and lappets. The whole spirit of the drama has become realistic. The play in verse has been completely defeated by the play in prose; the play dealing with former times has cleared off before the play dealing with our own days; and, on the rare occasion when the past is put upon the stage, no effort is spared to realize it in every detail—to turn it in a fashion into the present. Above all, the art

of acting has become merely the art of reproducing reality. In the account left to us of actors and actresses of former days, from Betterton to Talma, what strikes us, and what evidently struck contemporary audiences, was the pathos and passion with which certain capital passages were delivered. The excellence of the actor depended upon his power of exciting the audience at a given moment; the stories of Lekain and Adrienne Lecouvreur, even of the actors mentioned in Lessing's "Dramaturgie," clearly show this to have been the case; even if the structure of the plays elaborately worked up to certain dramatic points, and all the rest of the business left rather vague and conventional, did not force upon us the conclusion that complete realization of a situation, a scene or a person, absolute and uniform life-likeness, is a very modern conception indeed. In the middle of the last century, Lessing, the most realistic playwright and dramatic critic of his day, commended the

actor who performed his Odoardo Gallotti for picking nervously at the feathers in his hat while listening to the recital of Emilia's shame. Nowadays there is not a third-rate provincial actor, nay, scarcely an amateur, who would not have recourse to devices like this one, which a hundred years ago seemed little less than a stroke of genius. Even upon the opera stage it has become unusual for one performer to look on quietly without any sign of interest, while another is detailing his feelings in an air; and even in an Italian serious opera—that is to say, in the most idiotically undramatic drama of our time—one can notice gestures, that, for instance, of seizing hold of a woman's two hands, and then hurling her aside, which would probably have created a tremendous sensation if risked by Talma. The text is studied—even the most florid passages like Queen Mab and some of Hamlet's speeches—so as to extract from every word whatever indication of gesture or in-

tonation it might possibly contain, whatever dramatic essence the author failed to put in, and the critics insist upon putting in for him. Everything has to be made real, and hence the difficulty which a large amount of Shakspeare evidently presents to men like Salvini or Irving: they insist upon clearing up points which Shakspeare was evidently satisfied with overlooking; upon rendering life-like what the great poet had grandly left lifeless. Realization, that is the aim and end of our drama; and it has certainly been attained in the most marvellous manner.

I would have you try and recall, as vividly as you may, certain scenes of Sarah Bernhardt's, in order to appreciate what the art of realization has risen—or, may I say? has sunk to. Take for instance, "Féodora." Féodora is not merely a passionate, vindictive, tender, childlike, capricious, scatterbrained, and terrible woman—an extraordinary mixture of heterogeneous and conflicting qualities; but she is a woman

with a definite nationality, a definite temperament, a definite bodily and mental constitution, a Russian and a nervous subject, fit to be studied equally by the moralist, the ethnographer, and the physiologist; and she is not merely the typical Russian and the typical nervous subject, but an individual impossible to mistake or to forget. Try and grasp her as a whole; and then try and call up in your mind any one of her scenes, any one moment of her action or speech: the love-scene, in which she detains the man she has betrayed, the scene in which she implores the forgiveness of the man she has dishonoured. See, in your imagination, her silhouette as she clings to her lover's knees, as she drags him through the door, the mere outline of her face, her hands, at a given moment; or hear with your fancy one sentence in the low, hot, rapid voice, one cry, one sob. Revive the feelings which were yours in the presence of those real convulsions and gaspings of love and

rage and grief; and you will recognize, if you be neither dull nor callous, that they are the feelings which would have arisen if this stage play had been a reality—feelings of half-sickened interest, of half-degraded sympathy. The falling of the curtain did, indeed, overwhelm all this in the manifold realities of your own life; did, indeed, divert you to other feelings. But as long as it lasted, this stage-play was a reality; and a reality also was the sense of debasing shame at having seen what our nature forbids us to look at: the utter nakedness and prostration of a human soul.

## III.

It is horrible, such realism as this, and it is wrong. The instinct within us is perfectly correct, which makes us vaguely resent such things as an insult, almost an outrage, done to our whole better nature. Except where we can diminish its horror

(and in this case our attention is concentrated not on the evil but on our efforts to master it), it is bad, it is degrading for us to see too deep into the spiritual miseries of others, as it is to see too close into their physical ones. Is it because we all of us have moments which had better not recur twice, and because the fact of such moments being witnessed by others connects them more closely with ourselves, makes them more difficult to emerge from, that we have an instinct of hiding from sight our violent and momentary feelings? Is it that each separate soul requires a degree of isolation —requires to be separated from others when it is entirely swallowed up in its own self? I cannot venture to decide; I can only point out the fact that such an instinct exists strongly in all civilized creatures; and that, as I have said, we feel abashed and outraged when we are forced to intrude upon the moral privacy of others, to witness what we would not wish to show, even

as we feel abashed and outraged when our own moral privacy is invaded. I think, on the whole, that this curious instinct may be partly explained by not two creatures being alike, and by the consequent fact that we are injured morally by having the strain of another's misery put upon us roughly, without reference to our different powers and methods of bearing such strains. We can be useful only so long as we are true to ourselves; we must pick up our burden, so much of it as we can bear, and carry it according to the strength and shape of our spiritual shoulders; it must not be rudely hurled at us like a load of stones discharged from a cart.

But how, then, of the novel; and why should that be legitimate in a printed book which is not to be legitimate in an acted play? For the novel is essentially that form of art which brings us in contact with other folks' innermost soul. The explanation, to my mind, lies exactly in the dif-

ference between the thing which is read and the thing which is actually witnessed. In the case of the play the actor does the realizing, and to his realizing we are forced to submit. In the novel this realization is left in great measure to ourselves. In reading a book we usually realize only so much as we can bear; each reader, in point of fact, selecting automatically that which shall most impress him; or rather, details gravitating to the mind, flying to it like needles to a magnet, according as there exists a natural affinity between them and it. In reading, therefore, it is rare that violence is done to our feelings, to our preference and powers of understanding and enduring what is shown. We respond to the author's suggestion, we do one-half of the work, and do it, inevitably, in the way least painful to ourselves. Moreover, in this intellectual representation, our mind is appealed to, not our nerves; and our mind grasps, welds into an harmonious whole,

healthy and endurable, a whole state of feeling or a whole character, instead of having merely the outer expression thereof hurled violently at us. With this explanation is connected the fact that, in real life, we turn away with a feeling of decorum from the actual visible moment of agony, when that agony cannot be diminished by our aid, when it is a mere spectacle. The sobs and screams of even the holiest grief, sicken, unless we can abate them, even like physical loathsomeness; although we sympathize with the grief itself, and although we should perhaps, admire and even feel grateful for witnessing it, if we saw it as a mere feeling, making its way through self-command: in the latter case we are in the presence of a human being, in the former in the presence of a mere animal.

As long as what impresses us is the mere momentary physical expression, we cannot grasp the whole feeling and situation, we can

neither understand nor sympathize. While reading "Othello" our powers of understanding and sympathizing are constantly being appealed to: we master the situation, the miserable meeting of this man and this woman, each noble, but each destined to be the other's victim; we see where the mischief lies, we feel where we could ourselves have helped. The mere catastrophe, the few minutes of Desdemona's murder, are the least thing; the tragedy has been in Othello's soul, and is virtually over by this time. It is different in Salvini's representation. Here the murder is the chief interest—all works up towards it. We go away morally bruised and sickened by this sight, indifferent to all else. Comprehension, sympathy, all are swept away by sheer horror. The spiritual physiognomy of the persons is crowded out of our mind by the mere visible appearance of Othello, rushing and leaping, yelling that strange yell which is half bay, half sob, sobbing and panting,

dragging away Desdemona by the arm and the hair, peering from out of the bed-curtains in the midst of his half-finished work. That face among the curtains of the bed; that long, oval Tartar face, smooth and shining, with only an ill-growth of black bristles, with its distended veins and fearful white rolling eyes, a blood-like reflection thrown up to it by the red night-dress, the red curtains—that face stains itself indelibly into our imagination, and all else of the play, all the rest of the action, all the poetry of Shakspeare, pales and vanishes by its side.

## IV.

But Salvini is a great, a very great actor, one of the very greatest, in scenes like this one, that has ever lived. Undoubtedly. But are the plays of Shakspeare written for great actors? Is the highest expression of modern art fit to accompany the highest

expression of an art which, after all, was the product of nearly three centuries ago? The question may be reduced into a nutshell by asking whether the art of Shakspeare is realistic in the same sense as is the art of Salvini?

And, in the first place, can we of the end of the nineteenth century fairly judge what Shakspeare's art really is? In order to do so we must, so far as we can, remove the network of thoughts and feeling with which each succeeding generation of critics, of actors, and of readers have overlaid the original work. I sometimes doubt whether, even after all our trouble, we could see the real Shakspeare, so utterly have we corrupted the text of what he represents to our soul. The many scholars and societies who labour to give us back the original word and meaning of what he wrote are, in reality, defeating their own object: every explanation is virtually an interpolation, an alteration; and Shakspeare's plays are by

this time one mass of such interpolations and alterations. A book like that of Gervinus, for instance, is to my mind a perfect pest; and had Gervinus been a man of greater powers, it would have been a still greater one, if possible.

The besetting sin of all Shakspeare criticism, of all criticism, nay, of all intellectual manipulation whatsoever, is the mania for reducing a heterogeneous thing to a very simple formula. As our novelists seek to reduce the complexities of human character to one definable dominant character, so our critics seek to reduce the complexities of art to one very definable mission; whence arises that, as every definition means a number of omissions, as many definitions almost are possible as there are critics. The extraordinary insight into character which Shakspeare undoubtedly possessed, and his fondness for generalizing on questions of feeling and conduct—peculiarities, by the way, which were shared by his great

contemporaries, Webster and Ford and Beaumont and Fletcher, nay, even Marston and Heywood — these psychological elements in Shakspeare, which are the elements also most akin to our modern mind, have misled us into imagining that the art of Shakspeare is deliberately, consistently, nay, almost exclusively, psychological. As a matter of fact, I am inclined to think that pyschology is not the main object of Shakspeare's art, and that, if that art may be said to have any main object, it is merely to please by many and various means, of which the study of character is only one. The Shakspearian drama may, I think, be defined (since we can never escape the demon of definition) as the rough union of various artistic elements agreeable to his contemporaries into a whole which should give them the greatest aggregate of artistic pleasure; the exposition of some interesting action, spiced and garnished with every sort of extraneous thing, with high lyrism, buf-

foonery, wit, poetic fancy, obscenity, philosophy, and fashionable euphuism. The action is neither all-engrossing nor absolutely realized. The spectators take a considerable pleasure in the murder of the King, or the trial of the Merchant; but they are so far from absorbed by this situation that they can attend to and delight in all manner of irrelevancies. The actors strut on the stage, painted up for the parts, and gesticulating with a kind of general fitness, every now and then rising for a moment to close life-likeness; for the rest, gorgeously or quaintly attired in metaphorical word-brocades, or in freaked fool's motley, turning somersaults like a clown, and singing roulades like a prima donna. It sometimes happens, and in Shakspeare's greatest plays it happens often, that these conventional splendidly trapped stage-mimes have a moment of intense intuition, that they feel and understand, that a wonderfully pathetic intonation, an amazingly

characteristic gesture, suddenly interrupts the conventional strut and declamation—strut and declamation in no ridiculous or debasing sense of the words. They move, declaim, gesticulate, not with a view to realizing a situation, but with a view to pleasing the audience by a display of various splendid or comic elements. The action—except, perhaps, in "Othello," the play of Shakspeare's which is most modern, in the sense that Schiller is modern — is used mainly as a framework for this intellectual pageant, or opera in words. When it becomes interesting, riveting to the attention, this is usually an accidental result. The poet, for his part, is no more engrossed in the situation than is a composer in his libretto; he may recognize here and there a point suitable to some pathetic note, some terrible inflexion; but he goes on composing, here a buffo scene, here a bravura air, here again a piece of descriptive symphony, and so forth, without any of that

intense creative interest in characters and situations which we see in Schiller, or even, occasionally, in Racine—which we see in every trumpery modern novelist.

Shakspeare is not merely frequently indifferent to the possibility of a situation (as in the various sudden conversions of scoundrels, the cool interchanging of brides and bridegrooms, the cheerful acceptance of amazing discoveries), he is constantly violating all realism of detail. He constantly indulges in speeches which entirely disfigure a character and deaden a situation; he can no more resist a metaphorical or philosophical tirade in the midst of hurry and passion, than Rossini can resist a nice roulade in the midst of agony. There is in Shakspeare (if I may be permitted to continue my musical simile) much fine, free, natural recitative, with occasional intense poignancy of intonation; there is occasionally an instrumental bar or two of deeply imaginative suggestiveness, either

serene or ill-omened, like Banquo and Duncan's little conversation about the martlets, and the old man's story of Duncan's horses after the murder; but there is also an infinite amount of pure undramatic art, singing and fiddling for singing and fiddling's own sake. Macbeth's speech to the murderers can be compared only with a most intricate fugue, and I know of no composer who would have put a fugue in such a scene; compare with this metaphysical disquisition the rapid action of a much more lyrical and metaphysical poet, of Shelley in the similar scene in the "Cenci." Hamlet's speeches to the ghost constitute a grand aria as florid as any in "Semiramide;" the beautiful scene beginning "In such a night as this," in "The Merchant of Venice," is a perfect Mozartian duet between Jessica and Lorenzo, warbling at each other like Tamino and Pamina.

I think, therefore, that Shakspeare's art,

essentially pageant-like and decorative, and, if I may say so, operatic, accepted situations and characters only in a general way. I doubt whether, with the single exception of "Othello," Shakspeare was either a skilful conductor of action, like Calderon or Racine, or (in comedy) Goldoni, or a deliberate psychologist or reconstructor of character, like Schiller in "Wallenstein," or Goethe in "Tasso." He frequently realized character and situation with amazing power (as, with a lesser genius, did Webster), and his conceptions were nearly always coherent; but he troubled himself little about developing. People have seen in his conceptions every manner of thing that could not be there. Macbeth, Claudius, and the usurper in the "Tempest," are the typical tyrant, mere Kings of Clubs, not very much more individual than those on the playing-cards; they have a robe, a crown and armour, they are wicked and godless, and a little remorseful or cowardly every now and then; they

are very correctly trapped out in the correct conventional trappings of tyrants and usurpers. But it is absurd, I think, to seek in Shakspeare for a Philip II., an Ottavio Piccolomini, a President (in "Cabal and Love") like Schiller's, or a Francesco Cenci like Shelley's, let alone a Guido Franceschini. The man who could create so incarnate, so living a figure as any of these, who could momentarily quiver with the life of his creation, could surely never have put into its mouth the magnificent tirades which Shakspeare gave his tyrants, making them talk in the midst of action as Shelley scarcely allows his Prometheus to talk, bound in a cloud of lyrical inaction. A man like Schiller, for instance, would not have permitted himself such gross violations of possibility; or, rather, he would have been too completely wrapped up in his character's feelings to conceive anything else. That part of "Faust" which is really a play is much more realistic than almost

any play of Shakspeare's, although it has an intention far beyond any dramatic realism; Goethe never makes Faust, Gretchen, Valentine, Martha, or even Mephistopheles say things inconceivable in the given situation.

I do not believe that Hamlet, such as Shakspeare wrote him (as distinguished from Hamlet such as we read him) is as realistically conceived, as realistically carried out as Schiller's Don Carlos, much less as Goethe's Tasso; nor are Romeo and Juliet realized like Faust and Gretchen, Egmont and Clärchen, Max and Thekla. All that, I mean all that deliberate psychology, belonged to the period of literature for the closet; it could come only after Richardson and Rousseau; it required the sedentary, self-analyzing habits of novel-readers. The audience of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, who went to see murders and poisonings (we can judge of their requirements by the plays of Shaks-

peare's contemporaries as well as by his own), and to hear fine tirades and euphuisms, Baconian thoughts in Baconian-language, Rabelaisian jests in Rabelaisian jargon, and poetry more exquisite than any of Spenser or Sidney—such an audience, I say, could no more have followed the minute character-painting for which we give Shakspeare credit than they could have followed "Clarissa Harlowe" or "Wilhelm Meister." Perception, in all things, is a matter of practice; and we have been trained for two centuries (and at what a rate!) to understand Stendhal, Balzac, Charlotte Brontë, and George Eliot. Give Shakspeare the "Wahlverwandschaften" to read, and see what he will make of it. Not very much more than Palestrina would make of one of Beethoven's symphonies.

Considering all this, I think that the spirit of modern Shakspearianism, among readers, critics, and actors, is quite false to Shakspeare himself, because true to the

traditions of our own times. We read the things which he never wrote; the things which we have learned from Schiller and Goethe, nay, even from the whimpering, semi-serious playwrights of the eighteenth century, even from such creatures as Kotzebue; above all, what we have learned from the endless array of novelists and memoir-writers, countless as the army of Xerxes. We recognize occasional intuition of individual character, and we try to discover in Shakspeare a homogeneous development thereof, and, naturally, the less we see, the more persuaded we become of the wondrous occult existence.

Now, what the reader merely imagines in a play, the actor can actually give. The great actor is not merely a creator who can produce a character out of nothing, a mere word — "tyrant" — "jealousy" — "remorse"—representing to his special genius a whole complicated series of looks and intonations. The great actor is, even more

than an artist, a reality, a human being, a certain arrangement of temperament and character; and, as such, his reality as a human being fills out even the most shapeless conventional stage-personage; moves within it, and gives it a definite and real individuality. In Othello there is Salvini; in Féodora there is Sarah Bernhardt; and if Othello and Féodora were both of them perfectly unreal, Salvini and Sarah Bernhardt would be none the less real for that. This modern type of great actor (born long after Shakspeare's day in the sedentary French drama of the seventeenth century, and developed under the pressure of metaphysicians and novelists throughout the eighteenth century) can make out of Shakspeare's indications things far more complex and real than Shakspeare would ever have dreamed of. Why? Because he could make something complex and real without any such indications at all. Mrs. Siddons' Lady Macbeth (as noted down by

George Bell during the representations) is her creation, not Shakspeare's. The text by no means implies all the subtle shades which she gives. Nay more, the text often flies in the face of her conception of any consistently realistic creation, in innumerable lyric passages. And the proof thereof is the difficulty felt by all great modern actors as to the mode of treating these merely decorative speeches; how give reality to that which is not intended to be real? As, in an opera, a clever singer may act very finely during certain dramatic airs and recitatives and concerted pieces, but has nothing for it but to stand more or less foolishly while performing florid passages; so also an actor, in Shakespeare's day, may have given great power, say, to Richard III.'s scene with Ann, may have acted at her with perfect realism, but must certainly have delivered Richard's soliloquy to the pit merely as what it is, a magnificent piece of rhetorical writing.

In short, I return to my original remark that Shakspeare was not our contemporary, nor even the contemporary of Schiller and Goethe; that his audience had not read the "Comédie Humaine," "Madame Bovary," and "Middlemarch;" that his actors were neither Salvini nor Irving nor Sarah Bernhardt; and that his art is not the pure psychological drama of our realistic days, but a splendid combination of dramatic, philosophic, descriptive, and lyric elements; a great and magnificent pageant of the intellect and fancy.

## V.

A thing, therefore, no longer suited to our day? Not so. For with the daily increase of realism has gone the daily increase of the desire for the unreal. Familiarity with things as they are, which is realism, has provoked in us a passionate

craving for things as they are not. We have learned to appreciate the imaginative as the dwellers in a huge city appreciate the country; as the sedentary man of business or scholar appreciates physical exercise; as we matter-of-fact people of a humdrum present appreciate the incoherence, the strangeness of the past. The whole great movement of pre-Raphaelitism is there to prove it; we want Burne Jones because we have got Manet and Raffaelli: Morris and his earthly Paradise because we have got George Eliot and the whole turn-out of "Middlemarch." And this is but right. The real would crush us if we could not take refuge in the regions where the real never enters; the recognition of the fatal necessity of so much that runs counter to our instincts and aspirations would make us utterly wretched if we could not, at pleasure, give ourselves in imagination all those things which are refused by reality. Hence it is, that of all people, we realists of the

nineteenth century are, perhaps, the most in need of imaginative art, in want of the great pageant master, Shakspeare, not reduced to the proportions of a disciple of Sardou.

And hence it is that we require, as well as the dramatic, the undramatic; as well as the ugly, the beautiful; as well as what exists, that which has never existed. Hence it is (returning to the starting-point of my rambling discourse) that we absolutely require the return of the old gods to earth, or if not to earth, at least to our fancy. And it is for this reason, doubtless, that there has come in our day a re-incarnation of that mysterious youth, without the faintest first callowness of lip or cheek, yet older than the oldest grey-beard, that brother of Paris of Troy, and of the youngest of the Three Kings, who disappeared from Antiquity as Hylas and reappeared in the Middle Ages as the Bel Aucassin; and who has revisited the world

and our imagination among the side scenes of rustling elms of the pastoral stage at Coombe, exotic, enigmatic, exquisite, under the name of the Shepherd Perigot.





# LOMBARD COLOUR STUDIES.



## I.

### THE LAST MONK AT THE CERTOSA OF PAVIA.

(Bright Red, Bright Blue, Bright Green.)

He is the last surviving monk of the Certosa, and he is waiting (as he paces up and down the heated cloisters which do not warm his ice-cold feet, or kneels upon the damp-cold chapel flags which do not cool his burning body) for the fever, the enemy which has been besieging the great abbey these well-nigh five centuries, to make an end of him also.

It is the endless summer of the Lombard plain. The sun pours fire upon the big, empty courtyard, till the dry brown grass is burning to the touch. Fire upon the yellow marble (sunburnt by many such

summers) of the richly-carved church front, storey piled upon storey, garland upon garland, till the thin malignant sculptured heads of warriors and kings, Alexander, Cæsar, Scipio, Cocles crowned or filleted, become, as it were, the personifications of this malignant sun. The red-brick gables and pinnacles of shingled roof lie like flame against the sky of molten, flaming blue metal: and they tremble and undulate in its vaporous heat. The flowers and grass in the smaller cloister, half in the shadow of the belfry, are dead; the blue metal of the sky arches it over, and is felt like a white-hot iron held close to the skin, which does not touch, but burns; the sunshine lies on the burning red bricks like little pools of scarlet fire.

But outside, all around, spreads the soft, bright green grass of the irrigated meadows, damp and cool even now from the water which trickles incessantly in the little canals, under the thick green bushes,

everywhere; not a meadow without its clear brown brook. The white, shimmering trunks of the congregated poplars throw a deep, dark beam of shadow across the short, thick, bright green grass; while their thick tops, round clusters of shimmering leaves, green and white, sparkle and tremble and fan the blue sky. How green, cool, and refreshing such meadows under such heavens as these, by the side of all this mound of burning red brick! The brick is burning and red, making eyes and feet smart; and the meadows are cool and green, and balm to the parched skin and mouth. Yet death comes from those cool green meadows, and life lingers on within those burning red walls. For the green grass, the clear trickling water, are in league with the scalding blue sky; and their child, their fosterling, floating about with the wind among the hazel bushes and reeds, which bend over the streams, and among the rustling green tree tops, is the

fever. And from all sides, from every blade of juicy grass, from every trembling fresh leaf, it beleaguers those red sun-smitten walls, which rise up, with steaming and tremulous red belfries and domes and minarets, from the bright green meadows into the bright blue sky.

How long will that siege last? It has lasted, it would seem, near five hundred summers; among the pomp of carved marble and jasper and porphyry, and glittering gold and silver, among the pomp in which robed, silent monks assembling morning and evening in the sculptured choir stalls, pray for the soul of the great prince (his parricide scowl is repeated on pillar and medallion) who put them there; singing, among the incense clouds, the glory of Him who has bid the blue sky and the green grass beget the fever that burns and wastes them. And thus on for centuries, the blue sky and the green meadows have laid siege to the monastery.

And now there remains but one more man to exterminate. He paces, in his white robes, the cold dark church, the fever meanwhile burning his blood and his skin; and in the red cloisters, with their streams and pools of white sunlight, his teeth chatter and his feet strike like icicles upon the heated bricks. Meanwhile, from under the burnt brown grass of the cloister arises a faint, death-announcing, nauseousness of charnel; and the green glistening poplar heads nod and tremble over the red walls, in the tremulous blue glare of the sky.

## II.

### THE CAGE TOWER AT PIACENZA.

(Pale Red and Pale Blue.)

Below, all around, is the town; tortuous streets, stifling and sweltering, full of a jostling, yelling, quarrelling crowd of men and women and beasts: bestial and brutal,

eating and drinking, and filling the place with their filthiness and their noise. A grimy sliminess upon the walls, against which you brush; a black and nauseous ooze trickling between the rough round stones, and in every corner heaps of garbage and filth, round which the fat, slow flies buzz, while the gnats in swarms fill the sunbeam; a pushing and jostling of unwashed bodies, more stiflingly corporeal, fleshly, for heat, and crowd and weariness; and drunken brawl and obscene jest and angry oaths, coupling together God and dirt; no thought beyond the moment and the body. All squalid, stifling, murky, sweltering, and lewd down here.

And above, rising as if with gradual swiftness, as a visibly shooting flower-stem, the rose-pink square brick tower. Rising while our eyes follow it, above the stained walls, above the reefs and peaks and crags of roof and attic and chimney; above the deep red, scaly, shingly tiles of the church;

upwards. Upwards till it has against its red straight sides only the dark-blue distant hills bounding the plain; higher, till it touches only the blue of the lower sky; higher, till the pale rosiness of its brick, which has lost all body, and remained only colour, is surrounded by the pale milk-blue of the free upper sky.

Surrounding this pale pink stem of masonry (for it seems to touch nothing and nowhere) the blue whiteness of the heavens, the tremulous haze of light which seems to quiver and oscillate about it, to come and go in luminous tide-like waves, now lapping all round it, then quickly retreating, leaving it quite alone, isolated, in an unfathomable depth of blue air and white light. Below, the swallows circle, their white breasts shining in the sun; up, there is nothing save sun and air, light and life. And we look up in wistfulness and joy.

But upon the surface of the tower there is a spot, a shadow upon its luminous rose

brickwork, fretted and patterned like some delicate silken woof. From the topmost loophole is suspended a cage; iron grating above, iron grating below, iron grating all round. And in the cage is a man. They have brought him there in the morning, and will continue to do so on and on for days and months; chainless, free of arm and limb, free to crouch and turn as he will; a man, infamous in the world, whose punishment is to be here. The blue air circulates all round him, the white light streams down upon him, but the sun's fierce baking is cooled, washed away, by the eddying waves of air; neither heat nor cold is his punishment. It is the isolation, the blue air, the white light; the height, the height. The world below seems to suck him down, to drag him towards it, as the iron is dragged to the loadstone; but the bars of the cage restrain, thrust back. Oh, for the sickening delight of falling, of feeling one's self sink, the body going

down, clearing the air, free—but the bars hold him back. And he turns round and lies on his back, and looks up into the receding, palpitating, milk-white blueness; but the sky goes in and out, comes and goes like sucking lips, and it trembles with greed and pants with desire, and he feels it sucking him up, up, as the water is sucked by the sun out of the plants. But, between him and the blue heaven are the iron bars which restrain him, stop him at the moment of release only to let him be sucked up once more. And he turns on his side and, cowering, looks sidewards on the world below. The sunlit distant hills seem quite low; the high, sun-smitten, precipitous roofs are flat; the streets between them are like tortuous black brooks, the courts like deep black wells; the market-place crowded with people is a teeming moving mass of dark things. He looks down. Oh, that he could only hear those men whom he sees move, or hear more

than a mere hum; that he could sniff the hot, close, stenched-filled air; that he could know he was not cut off from the living! The crowd moves to and fro with its buzz of cries and clattering steps; it moves, divides, unites again like water on the sands. They have a fair to-day—they are selling their hemp, and wine, and cattle. They think of that and not of him. He was taken up there so long ago, and others have been in the cage before him; they have forgotten all about him; they do not even look up. And the man seizes the bars of the cage, and shaking them, yells with the rage of weariness. But no one hears him. The swallows circle below; the blue air palpitates around; the white sunshine trembles on the bricks of the town. The whitish-blue sky receives into itself the pale rosy stem of masonry which shoots up, penetrates into it like some living delicate thing. The cage, the prisoner are forgotten.



# DON JUAN (CON STENTERELLO).



# DON JUAN (CON STENTERELLO).

"Of course there was a real Don Juan," answered Don José, with that curt Spanish gravity which made one think of an Alcalde in one of Calderon's plays. He was leaning against the back of the box, or rather (for we had opened the door) against the wall of the narrow corridor, blowing long wreaths of smoke from under his big grey moustaches, and tempering with his cigarette the mingled smell of gas, of garlic, and of generations of bygone play-goers, which pervaded that little theatre sacred to one of the last of Italian masks, the Tuscan clown Stenterello. "Of course there was a real Don Juan;

that Tenorio who is buried at Seville, and whose tremendous chastisement we are about to witness; but there were others besides him, brilliant evil-doers who received miraculous warnings to change their ways. When I was a boy people used still to narrate the story of some of these minor Don Juans—that, for instance, of a certain Don Miguel de Mañara, a famous Lovelace, who happened one evening to meet his own funeral; and a similar one about a young gentleman of Madrid, an officer in King Philip V.'s bodyguard. But the strangest of all these stories, to my mind, is that of my fellow-citizen, Don Francisco Velasco——"

The curtain had fallen between the last act but one and the last. We had witnessed the violent abduction of Doña Anna and the pathetic death of the respectable Commander, father of that lady, villainously run through the body by Don Juan Tenorio. We had been horrified by the

shocking blasphemies of Don Juan in the cemetery, and the tremendous answer of the statue of the commander, "Pentiti Ribaldo!" ("Repent, villain!") echoed by Don Juan's servant, the poor silly clown Stenterello, vociferating the cry of the pipkin-sellers: "Pentolaio, Donne!" ("the pipkin-seller, women!"). And we had actually beheld (so genuine is the supernatural even in the twopenny theatre of Borgo Ognissanti) the white marble commander shaking with laughter on the top of his cardboard bronze charger, and showering upon the horrid blasphemer and his servant a rain of flour from his whitened face and drapery at every special piece of the clown's humour. Finally there had been the grand scene of the wicked libertine supping magnificently off a dish of salad and sausage, at a banqueting table adorned with a monumental wooden cruet-stand, while poor Stenterello, with his painted face and pigtail, ran about like a scared rabbit





before the ghost of the commander, tried to hide behind a straw-bottomed chair and under the table, and finally, wild with terror, plopped down upon the lap of the marble guest. After an universal roar of laughter, in recognition of the last words of the clown, "Sir, sir, he's gone and rolled down the staircase. Boum! Boum! he's gone and broken himself into a hundred pieces!" the audience began to rise, to stretch their stiffened arms and legs, to yawn and hum; while there resounded from behind the curtain the hammering which was to furnish an appropriate hell wherein to damn the unrepenting sinner. The pit was gradually emptied of spectators hurrying to drink their usual glass of coffee dregs and spirit, or to smoke the half cigar which they had extinguished on entering and carefully treasured in a breast pocket. There remained only a sprinkling of the types that you meet in every cheap little Italian theatre: the respectable little soldier, who

has got permission to play the horn in the orchestra; the Jewish pawnbroker, with the battered tall hat and Nineveh bull profile; the swell cad, like the Emperor Nero when he was down in the world, dressed in immense yellow and black checks, and staring solemnly at all the girls; the peasants come for a jaunt in the tram, sunburnt women, with bright kerchiefs on their heads, gathered round the young countryman buried in fox furs, and pretending to be perfectly at his ease in town, and not to have anything to do with all this womankind. And higher up, in the eighteenpenny boxes, sleepy or radiant faces of children; solemn and prim faces of footmen and housemaids, treated to the play by their masters. From the deserted pit rose a thick atmosphere of stale cigar and stale gas, and garlic and damp, to which were now added the acrid sulphuric fumes of the supernatural light which had accompanied the apparition of the Commander. In the midst of all this,

Don José's cigarette was as delicious as a sea breeze.

"Tell us the story of Don Francisco Velasco," begged the little English poetess (you remember, Carlo, how sillily she behaved, laughing like a baby and clapping her hands to burst her tiny gloves at every blank verse grandiosity of the Commander, and every idiotic pun of Stenterello's).

"Do tell it us, Don José," we all repeated. Don José slightly raised one thick eyebrow; he blew a great lilac smoke wreath from under his moustaches, and began his story, which he illustrated with his rapid, brusque, soberly dramatic Spanish gestures:

"I must explain that a few years ago I had to make some antiquarian researches in my native city of Granada. These researches led me one day into the hall of a religious confraternity, a kind of sacristy, panelled with cupboards and hung with old portraits. Among these was the likeness of a cavalier of the seventeenth century,

dressed in black, with the name painted on the frame: Francisco Velasco. This name brought to my mind a lot of childish impressions; I had heard it often from my nurses. 'Tell me,' I said to the beadle, 'wasn't he an awful good-for-nothing, that Francisco Velasco, and didn't something very extraordinary happen to him?' 'Yes, sir,' he answered, 'and it was that adventure which caused him to reform his life, so that he died in odour of sanctity, and a great benefactor of this confraternity,' and then he told me the following story:

"This Don Francisco Velasco was one of the prettiest gallants of Granada—noble, rich, handsome, witty, dare-devil, and, moreover, an admirable player on the guitar. He was much in request with the ladies, but not at all with their husbands; a terrible fellow, who feared neither God nor the Devil. One evening that he was strolling about in quest of adventures, and idly thrumming on his guitar, he saw a lady

leaning out at the balcony of an old mansion. It was a beautiful moonlight night, and Don Francisco was perfectly able to recognize in that lady one of the loveliest women in Granada, but with whom he had never succeeded in setting up a flirtation; nay, she seemed to him, leaning on the balustrade in that wonderful moonlight, more beautiful with a strange sort of beauty than he had ever thought her before. He stopped to look at her, and bowed. And this began a polite conversation. At last the lady invited Don Francisco to come in and have some supper in her company. Velasco did not wait to be asked twice. He found the house door open, and went up. The lady struck him as being even more beautiful seen from near than from far. She was dark, pale, very pale, with a something strange and even a trifle sinister in her loveliness, but perfectly adorable.

"They had a most agreeable supper; and afterwards, as the musical fame of Velasco was universal in Granada, the lady begged

him to play her something on his guitar. What with talking and making music, they sat up very late. Indeed, the dawn was whitening the sky, and from a neighbouring yard there rose the crowing of a cock.

"At this sound the lady trembled all over.

"'Go—leave the house immediately,' she cried; 'for if they find you I am a lost creature.'

"Don Francisco, who in such matters was the very soul of discretion, took leave, although most unwilling to lose any of that amiable company; and the lady led him stealthily to the door, but not without many mutual promises to resume an acquaintance so pleasantly begun."

Don José stopped a moment to light a fourteenth or fifteenth cigarette, looking slowly round and solemnly from one listener to the other.

"The lodging of Don Francisco Velasco," he continued, after that little pause, "was very far from the house of the lady.

"He was walking slowly in the grey dawn, going over with delight the various items of that evening, which seemed to him the pleasantest he had ever spent, and drawing out a mental inventory of the rare charms of that lady. He was disturbed in these agreeable meditations by the sound of a bell, which was tolling *pro defunctis*. He couldn't tell why, but that lugubrious knell irritated him fearfully.

"'Who the devil is this confounded dead creature boring me with all this ringing?' he muttered to himself.

"His way led him in front of the church whence the tolling proceeded.

"'Who is it that's dead?' he asked carelessly of the sacristan, who was sweeping the church steps.

"'Doesn't your Excellency know? It is the lady Such-a-One.'

"'Who?' shrieked Don Francisco.

"'The lady Such-a-One, at your Excellency's service.'

"Don Francisco very nearly knocked the poor sacristan into the gutter.

"'Impudent scoundrel! I'll teach you to get drunk and make game of a cavalier,' he cried. 'The lady Such-a-One is alive—extremely alive. Why, I saw her——'

"He was about to add 'not ten minutes ago,' but stopped short, like the discreet gallant that he was.

"The poor terrified sacristan took refuge in the church; and Velasco went his way, resuming the thread of his agreeable reflections, merely laughing at the bungle of that drunken sot. But his laughter was just a trifle forced, and the recollection of last night had lost a little of its sweetness.

"Back at home, he threw himself, dressed as he was, on his bed, and tried to sleep. But he was only just falling asleep when he was roused by the lugubrious sound of a bell ringing the death knell. It was that same bell.

"He called his servant.

"'Run to such and such a church, and ask who it is that's dead. But, mind you, don't ask the sacristan, who's an ass and a drunkard;' and he turned round on his bed and shut his eyes.

"But he found it impossible to sleep. That bell was going on with its melancholy sounds.

"The servant returned.

"'Well?' asked Don Francisco.

"'I didn't ask the sacristan, because your Worship said he was drunk; but I asked a lot of other people. The church was crowded, because they were preparing the catafalque; and they all said that the dead person is the lady Such-a-One.'

"Don Francisco jumped off his bed. He seized his hat and cloak, and flew out of the house. In less than a minute he arrived, running with all his might, at the house of his lady-love. There could be no doubt —it was she who was dead. He recognized the coat of arms over the door, the balcony

at which she had appeared. But everything else was changed. The door was streaming open, as is the case in houses where some one has just died; and a crowd of friends and idlers coming in and coming out, according to the Spanish custom, for the fun of seeing the corpse. Velasco pushed his way among the people. He rushed upstairs, passed between a row of lacqueys in mourning, and penetrated into the mortuary room. He recognized the room at once—the curtains, hangings, the paintings on the ceiling, everything. In the middle, surrounded by lighted tapers, was a black coffin placed on a black table. It seemed to Don Francisco that he knew that table; either he had been dreaming, or, a few hours before, he had supped at that table! And in the coffin, dressed in white and covered with flowers, he saw *her!* It was she, there could be no doubt. It was that same face of strange and sinister loveliness, with the locks of black hair, paler

yet, nay waxen, and already tipped with the violet tints of death.

"Velasco stood still, and considered her long and carefully, with a kind of ferocity. He was making frightful efforts to understand. This woman—three hours ago—he had spoken to her, kissed her; she had been alive, most living. And yet—— This woman, this corpse, already stiffened, and which was beginning to show the hues of corruption, was a thing dead, stark dead, since some time.

"'When did she die?' he asked of one of the women who surrounded the coffin.

"'Last night, about eleven.'

"It must have been about eleven when he had first seen her leaning out at the balcony; or rather when he had dreamed she had done so. For it became more and more evident, with every moment that he stood before the coffin, staring at that pale and violet-hued face in the yellow light of the tapers, that he had been the sport

of a dream—a dream of marvellous vividness, but a dream certainly. And meanwhile the bell continued tolling the death knell.

"He must have seen her recently; and he had dreamed of her, heaven knows why. The whole of that adventure had been only a dream. Don Francisco, you see, was a libertine and an atheist: he believed neither in God nor in the Devil. Therefore he was bound to think that it had all been a dream. But how vivid, by Heaven! He was going away. He turned round once more to have a last look at that face of wonderful and sinister beauty, stranger and not less beautiful now. Looking round, he saw, by the light of the tapers, standing in a corner, a guitar.

"It was his.

"After this," added Don José, looking at us one by one with that gravity of a hidalgo by Velasquez; "after this, Don Francisco Velasco mended his ways. He

took to good works and religious exercises; and died, as I said before, in odour of sanctity."

In a flare of pink bengal light, and a suffocating stench of sulphur, the statue of the Commander, seated at supper, offered politely to help Don Juan to various dishes composed of live vipers, hell flames, and similar delicacies.

We left the theatre, and walked slowly towards home, beneath a winter full moon that looked like blue steel, and against which stood out yellow the gaslights, and the little lamps of the orange barrows at the theatre door. The streets, bathed in white light, were empty between the tall white houses; only, every now and then, there echoed the voice of some fellow calling his companions or the false notes of a chorus of street boys. The conversation naturally turned upon Don Juan; upon that legend, so intensely national, and which has yet imposed itself upon the imagination of the

whole world; upon that great sinner who descended to damnation in an apotheosis of poetry and music.

"Don Juan," said the English essayist, "is merely the ideal representative of those things which the world still admires, but religion already condemns. He symbolizes the melancholy truth that when authorised morality has already long determined that some deeds ought not to be committed, the world still allows them, nay applauds if they are committed gallantly, with aristocratic bravery, art, and insolence: seducing women, killing men in duels, ruining one's creditors, and generally setting the very worst example to everybody. The moral and imaginative originality of Spain consists in this, that while other nations have recognized only one side of the problem, the English throwing stones at Lovelace, the French bowing obsequiously before M. de Camors; the Spaniards have known how to distinguish, just as my coachman knows how to distinguish when he

says that, if he had his way, the inventors of steam-trams ought to be given the cross of an order and then thrown down from the tower of Palazzo Vecchio. Spain has dropped a deep curtsey before Don Juan; and then sent him comfortably to fry in Hell."

We had got to the top of Via dei Servi. The square surrounded by slender porticoes, was filled with luminous moon-mist; and in the midst of that pale, blue, luminous haze, rose the equestrian statue of Grand-duke Ferdinand: immense, immaterial, mysterious in that moon-beam which moulded the flanks and neck of the horse, and laid plates of shining silver upon the vague green of the armour.

"The statue of the Commander!" whispered the poetess. And the musical friend intoned, in his deep voice, the even awful notes of Mozart's churchyard scene. "Ribaldo, audace, lascia ai morti la pa-a-a-ce."

Our Spanish friend stopped for a moment in contemplation of that horse and horseman of greenish bronze, who seemed to grow, to become gigantic and slowly to move towards us in the luminous moonlight haze, under the sky of lucid blue steel.

"Don Miguel di Mañara," he said, after a moment, "was a villain of the same sort as Don Juan Tenorio, only rather worse. One evening, as he was going to the lady whom he was courting at that moment, he fell upon a magnificent funeral procession, which was moving slowly with torches and church chants, through the principal streets of his town. Don Miguel was in a hurry, and that procession obliged him either to wait or to take a roundabout way. Impious and violent, he could not endure the delay, and tried to push his way through the crowd. The crowd pushed him back.

"'Who is this dog, this renegade Moor of a dead man, who makes a cavalier lose his

time?' he shouts, pushing his way, sword in hand.

"'It is a great noble,' answer the people; 'it is Don Miguel di Mañara.'

"Don Miguel rushes to the bier and tears off the pall. The dead man is himself!"



# SIGNOR CURIAZIO.

## A MUSICAL MEDLEY.

# SIGNOR CURIAZIO.

## A MUSICAL MEDLEY.

NONSENSE! I said to myself, it surely could never have been that preposterous Curiatius of Cimaroza's *Orazi*,—that most dapper, finical, bergamot-scented, hair-powdered, minuet-tripping, musical demi-god of the year '96, the embodiment —nay, rather the apotheosis—of everything that is *rococo* in music; no, surely not. I had been seeking to sum up for myself my ideas about Wagner's theories and practice, no easy matter in itself; and now the confusion, almost inevitable, in every attempt to reason out musical hows and wherefores, must be quite gratuitously increased by the question, Why on earth there had suddenly

come into my thoughts so irrelevant a creature as Signor Curiazio? if, indeed, Signor Curiazio it really had been.

This is how it had come about. Meditating upon Wagner, I had naturally enough tried to conjure up that recent performance of his *Tristram and Yseult*,—the opera, as all know, in which his theories have been carried out most completely, and with the least possible of those concessions to present musical habits which have been the price of the real popularity of some of his other works. I had tried to remember exactly what that performance had been like—or, rather, what like had been my impressions and feelings, my musical and mental condition—while it went on. First, in my efforts to remember, came back the sort of general remarks which I had made to myself immediately after it was all over; then, and with more difficulty, I was able to realize once more, but only in interrupted bits (like reading a torn-up letter), the way

in which I had felt while listening to that opera. Clearest and strongest came the sense that I had thought the whole performance most utterly and drearily undramatic; that, oddly enough, this composer, who denies the legitimate existence of music when separate from dramatic action, had completely failed to inspire me with the very smallest interest in the men and women whose joys and woes his music professed to express. I remembered how it had struck me that all this world of Tristram and Yseult was utterly unreal, without real emotions, real actions—nay, real actors; since it seemed to me as if these heroic creatures were mere phantoms, such as are formed by the shifting mists and moonbeams and shadows; things which, if you looked into their face, would show a blank, if you followed them, would vanish, dissolve; nay, rather like the fantastic forms that seem to emerge, to rock on the wave-tips, to dive into the wave-hollows of a





moonlit sea; mere spectre shapes, in reality the mere fancy illumined crests and bosoms of the swaying musical waves. And then it came back to me, gradually, the listening to that music; the watching of that fluctuating ocean of beautiful sound, whose little wavelets, like those of the real ocean, are never exactly identical, and are yet the same from moment to moment; monotonous even in the gusts of passion which every now and then brush across it, creating only a new kind of vagueness, a new kind of monotony; it returned to me, that dreary listening, until the unceasing, invariable emotion of these strains becomes at last no emotion at all, but a kind of weary vacuity; until, as with the sound of the sea or of a river weir, the ceaseless flow of this music lets you perceive, at last, no music at all. Now, whether it was a repetition of what had actually occurred (unperceived and unremembered by myself) during those real hours of real

listening to Wagner's opera, or whether the thing happened only in this imaginary performance of Tristram in my memory, I cannot tell; but certain it is, that floating, as it were, on this flood of vague and wearisome musical impressions, there had come to me, submerged continually, and continually returning to the surface (as all manner of recollected things do go floating and knocking about in one's mind during a musical performance, or the recollection thereof), an idea, an impression, a sort of fragment of consciousness.

I ought not to call it an idea, it was nothing of the sort; it was something utterly confused and nondescript, something which was at the same time (illogical things can be expressed only in illogical words) a sense of approval, and a short phrase of music. This vague I-know-not-what came floating into my consciousness, disappearing and re-appearing, till at length I fished it out, and tried to discover what manner of

thing it might be. After a good deal of wondering, the impression, thought, feeling, —call it by what name you will,—proved itself to consist in a sense of deep sympathy, and of five notes, to which, after a little more scrutiny, I found attached the words —"*O mio Curiazzi!*"

Curiazio! Who was Curiazio? and why should that quite uninteresting phrase of old-fashioned recitative have returned to my memory just in the midst of Wagner's opera? Above all, why should a sort of consciousness of something beloved and sorrowed for have come then, and come even now once more, along with it? Curiazio! I said to myself; Curiazio! The only Curiazio I have any knowledge of is the hero of Cimaroza's opera of the *Horatii and Curiatii*, which I read years ago, when I had a great craze for all manner of eighteenth-century concerns, especially musical. And, in fact, this phrase which thus returned to me, wholly detached from its surroundings,

must be a sentence of a long recitative in which Horatia, sister of the Roman champions, bewails the death of her lover Curiatius ; a recitative which cannot be very interesting in itself, since this phrase is the only scrap of it that I can possibly call to mind. Thus much is clear. But why on earth should these five notes have haunted me during the Wagner performance? Why of all operatic heroes and heroines that ever existed, should this Curiazio have intruded into the company of Tristram and Yseult? In order that you may appreciate to the full the unexpectedness, the incongruity, the grotesqueness of this meeting between the most tragic pair of mediæval lovers and this particular ancient Roman of the late eighteenth century, it is necessary that I attempt to give you some idea of Signor Curiazio. The business is a little roundabout, but its oddity deserves to be satisfactorily understood.

One of the most curious visions of that

Italian operatic world of the eighteenth century, of which Signor Curiazio is one of the chief heroes, is afforded in a comedy entitled *Le Convenienze Teatrali* (the etiquette of the stage), by one Antonio Sografi of Padua. Its subjects are the immediate preliminaries of the performance of a bran-new heroic opera at the annual fair of Lodi in Lombardy, somewhere in the eighties or nineties of the last century; and its principal fault consists of omitting a number of remarkable characters and important transactions belonging to an earlier date in affairs; which, however, thanks to the writings of Goldoni, of Marcello, of Gozzi, and of a great number of other wits of the eighteenth century, it will be quite possible to reproduce in a sort of imaginary prologue to Sografi's play.

Let us therefore begin. An exceedingly lean and lantern-jawed person, dressed in excessively ragged and snuff-stained clothes, has by dint of invincible patience and humility under insult, of much flattery of

lacqueys, chorus singers, tailors' apprentices, and ladies' maids, at last made his way to the great Venetian manager, and induced him to take him into his services as poet-in-ordinary to the operatic company of Lodi. This poet, whom subsequent events may possibly identify with Antonio Sografi in person, is a man of genius whose philosophical theses have been rejected by many universities, whose imitations of French novels or of the History of the Cavaliere Carlo Gradisson, by Mossù Richardson, have been sent back by every bookseller in the Merceria at Venice; whose birthday odes and sonnets "on a favourite canary," on "a little dog named Puff," etc., etc., etc., have failed to elicit any kind of munificence on the part of various noble Mæcenases and divine nymphs; but who has now made up his mind that his vocation is tragedy—that is to say, opera, and that in a few years he will receive an autograph letter from the Emperor of Germany, Ever August, offering

him any number of golden ducats, besides houses, villas, coaches, liveries, and the rank of Aulic Counsellor, if he will consent to step into the place of Poeta Cesareo, unworthily occupied ever since the demise of the immortal Abate Metastasio. The emoluments offered by the great Impresario are indeed (as the poet confides to sundry ragged and hungry men of letters at the coffee-house, where, saving firing and lights, he spends his days and nights, living on sugar and water) not what a poet of his standing might have insisted upon; but then, as everybody knows, glory, not base lucre, is the true remuneration of genius. Meanwhile arrives at last the longed-for day, when the poet is to read his master-piece to the principal performers and to a small number of distinguished patrons of poetry and song at the house of the most illustrious Count Somaroni, a great local Mæcenas who has been induced to buy a quarter of the shares in the theatre on the arrangement

that his name is to figure on all the play-bills, and on all the sonnets which are being printed to be showered down on the first performance. After several hours spent in ingeniously powdering his wig with flour from the baker's downstairs, and painting the rusty seams of his coat with ink, the son of Apollo, as he usually styles himself, betakes himself to the Somaroni Palace, impressing upon himself on no account to unbutton his clerical black coat, as he has recently left his waistcoat in pawn. The lacqueys at the palace show at first an unaccountable reluctance to let him in, but at last consent, and deposit him in an anteroom, taking good care to turn the key in all the neighbouring doors. Here he is, after an hour or so, joined first by one, then by another of his operatic colleagues, the scene-painters, mechanicians, composer, second or third tenor, second or third woman (for the *prima donna* will naturally arrive only when the whole meeting has

broken up), dropping in, in the order of their unimportance, and making surprised remarks, raising complaints in proportion to their own magnitude [illegible]sition, at nobody being there to receive [illegible]m. Finally in runs the great Impresario in person, a little creature who attempts, in glib Venetian dialect, to pacify the company, which naturally falls upon him like one man. What can he do, if the *primo uomo* is two hours and a half too late for his appointment, and if the illustrious Mæcenas have forgotten all about the business? He, poor man, what is he? At this moment the folding doors are thrown open, and every one rises, men and women, singers, composer, scene-painters, mechanicians, poet. On the threshhold a polite pantomime is going on between the great *primo uomo* and the great Mæcenas; each feeling in his heart that he is not of such fully established greatness perhaps as the other, bowing, smiling, waving his hand towards the door, and

entreating the other to precede him. Finally the *primo uomo*, having the better opinion of himself of the two, walks in before the illustrious Mæcenas, who is thirty years his senior, and whose ancestors were German barons of Barbarossa. The Count gracefully kisses his finger tips to the female part of the assembly ; the *primo uomo* stalks in as if he had never seen any of them before, and immediately begs the Count's permission to put on his hat. After which he button-holes him, and begins to converse with him on indifferent topics in front of the large earthenware brazier which serves to heat the apartment. At last the manager, after many imploring looks, some muttered oaths among the rest of the company, and many unnoticed Neapolitan ejaculations from the composer, comes forward, and ventures to remind His Excellency that he had graciously promised to listen to the reading of the libretto of the new opera. Mæcenas consents, and settles himself in an arm-chair.





The *primo uomo* stretches himself gracefully on a sofa, the better to display the top-boots and leathern breeches which denote his admiration for English institutions; the poet, all in a tremble, gets up behind his table, unrolls his manuscript, coughs, and looks round him. . . . His eyes fall upon the *primo uomo*, who is leaning backwards on the sofa, and recounting to Mæcenas the manner in which he ordered those top-boots, and threatened the shoemaker with a whipping if he made more than the prescribed five wrinkles. The poet, who has just read the three words, "Anaximander, King of ——" stops, sighs, looks round. Then, failing to obtain any notice, he coughs again, and in a louder voice reads, "Anaximander, King——" A slight murmur of approbation greets him from those seated round the table; but the two on the sofa pay no attention. The Impresario groans, clasps his hands, shrugs his shoulders; then at last screws up his courage, and rising,

bows to the ground before the Count, asking him when it will suit his pleasure that the reading should begin. Mæcenas gives a well-bred start, puts out both his hands, nods, and begs the poet to begin reading his immortal work.

"Anaximander, King of Magnesia," reads the poet; "a lyric tragedy in three acts."

"Bravo!" cries the Count.

"A-hem!" remarks the Impresario. "Would you mind reading that name again, dearest Poet?"

"Anaximander, King of Magnesia."

"Magnesia! *Mamma mia!*" exclaims the thick Neapolitan voice of the composer; "at all events he could never be in want of drugs, that king of yours!"

"Ana—Ana—excuse me," interrupts the Impresario, but does it not seem to your Excellency" (turning to the Count) "that that name would not be quite the thing on the play-bills?"

"No thought of it, Poffar di Bacco!" answers the Count.





"I think then," lisps the Impresario in his dainty Venetian, "that we must look for another title. Tell me, most esteemed poet, is there no action—no something or other in the play, which might serve as a title instead of Ana—Ana—what's his name? For instance, the Heroic Deceit, the Generous Usurper—anything pretty like that?"

"The King of Magnesia, or the Unintentional Apothecary (*lo speziale senza volerlo*)" suggests the composer.

"*Silenzio!*" cries the Count.

"I fear," answers the poor poet, desperate to get on, "that there isn't—at least, I can't think of any at present, perhaps later."

"Yes, yes, later," exclaim the Count and Impresario, simultaneously; "please go on. It is very interesting."

"Anaximander, King of Magnesia," reads the poet for the fourth time.

"An—ax—i—mander," comments the

Impresario. "*Madonna mia!* That will never do for the play-bill."

"Act I., Scene I.," continues the poet. "The stage represents a rich and magnificent portico, communicating with delicious gardens; a deep river in the background—a boat slowly descends the river."

The Impresario and the scene-painter have meanwhile been exchanging various mysterious signs.

"I beg your pardon," says the scene-painter, "would you mind turning that river into the sea? We have the sea still remaining from *Achilles on Scyros*, of five years ago, with a ship and all. I cannot undertake to give a river for the same price, as it would have to be newly painted."

"But it is inland—it is in Media; there is no sea there," cries the poet.

Bah!" answers the Impresario; "what does that matter—a sea or a river? It's all the same water, *la-x'è sempre acqua l'istess*——"

"Try putting it somewhere else," suggests the scene-painter.

The poet makes a marginal note and proceeds.

"Gardens, with a river—I mean the sea—in the background; a boat approaches; Artabaxus gets out of it, followed by Pharnabanes; he motions Pharnabanes to remain in the background; Artabaxus alone."

The poet turns towards the *primo uomo*, who has meanwhile sat down to the harpsichord and begun strumming and humming in his teeth, "If a finger has been burnt, with ink it can be cured," etc., from Paisiello's *Barbiere di Siviglia*.

"This, sir," says the poet, in his most mellifluous voice, "concerns you, if I may hope to have the supreme joy of hearing your magical voice giving life to my ——"

"With ink it can be cured that's true," proceeds the *primo uomo*, imitating, with ridiculous effects, the deepest tones of the

*basso buffo*, to the roars of laughter of the Count.

"If I may hope to have the supreme joy of hearing your magical voice giving life to my poor rhymes," concludes the poet.

"Eh?" asks the singer, turning round; "did you speak?"

"I said, sir, that this is your part," answers the poet, losing patience.

"Ah, good; then you may read," and the *primo uomo* turns round, his hands in the pockets of his yellow-and-blue striped groom's waistcoat, tenderly contemplating his boot-tops, and conscious at the same time of the inimitable manner in which his hair, just a little grey with powder, is cut over his eyes in a *fringe à la Brutus*.

"Artabaxus—that is you, sir, alone."

"Is that the beginning of the play?" asks the *primo uomo*, raising his eyes but not his head.

"Yes, sir."

"Ah, well, you will be so good as to

alter it, and to remember in future that I make it a rule never to come on the stage for the first time except on horseback.'

"But—I really am very sorry—in future I shall bear it in mind, but on this occasion——"

"And," proceeds the *primo uomo*, "of course you are aware that the last air of each act has to be sung by me."

"We shall see what the *prima donna* says to that," mutters the Impresario.

"And that I must have a scene in prison, chained, with a recitative, in the second act, before the pathetic air."

"For a moment, let us see about this horse—*sto benedeto cavalo*," says the Impresario briskly. "*Orsù*, dearest poet, put in a little note about the horse in the first act."

"But——" protests the poet, who has vainly been attempting to speak.

"You shall see what a horse!" cries the Impresario to the *primo uomo*, "a horse!—such a horse! I swear that not even the

Emperor himself has such a beast in his stable. Big, tall, fiery, raises his legs, that it's a delight to see him; and at the same time good, sweet, steady, as if he were made of sugar."

"But it is quite impossible for you to come in on horseback. Artabaxus is an out-lawed prince, pursued, and he has come in a boat, disguised as a fisherman," at last blurts out the poet.

"He will have to come in on horseback all the same," answers the *primo uomo*.

"I really am in the last degree sorry; but how can he come on horseback, when he is pretending to be a fisherman?"

"I am not coming in like a dirty fisherman, and I am coming in on horseback."

The Impresario perceives that the situation is getting rather strained.

"Of course," he exclaims; "who talks of anything else? It's a matter which can be settled with a stroke of the pen. *Ghe se accomoda co no strissin de pena.*"

The poet clutches his head wildly with both hands.

"But, Little World! Mondo Piccino! how can I e in on horseback? Consider ıation."

" a dramatic situation t rimo uomo, getting shrill. rseback, or not at all."

"Of course," cries the Count.

"Of course," cries the Impresario; "how should he come, except on horseback? And he rides divinely! One must see it! *Ghe le x'è proprio un piaser.*"

"But a horse cannot come in a fishing-boat," protests the poet.

"I have always had a horse," whimpers the *primo uomo* angrily. "I have had a horse at Palermo, at Genoa, at Venice——"

"Was it one of those off St. Mark's, my heart?" asks the composer in an undertone.

"They had to put in a horse at Turin

and at Parma, by order of the Minister," proceeds the *primo uomo*, "and I am not to have a horse at a dirty, pottering fair of Lodi!"

"*Per Carità*," implores the Impresario, "don't excite yourself. He has had a horse by order of the Spanish ambassador once, do you hear?"

"But it is not a matter of whether it is Lodi or Venice; it is a question of dramatic propriety."

"What's dramatic propriety to me?" shrieks the *primo uomo;* "a thing for a dirty, starving ragamuffin of a poet! Come and talk about dramatic propriety to a *virtuoso* of my standing!"

"It is indeed vain to talk of such things to the likes of you," answers the poet.

"I, who have sung at Petersburg, in London, in Vienna—a cavaliere like me, is to be taught dramatic propriety by a Mr. Playtinker, a Sir Patcher-up-of-nonsense—a——"

"Do not pay any attention to the fool, the dog, the poet," implores the Impresario; "he shall be brought round to his senses. Oh, be calm! [illegible]r your voice."

"And you," tu[illegible]o the poet with a terrible voice, "[illegible]e! Decamp!" Then, in a [illegible]We'll settle it all later."

"Begone!" echoes t[illegible] Count sternly.

"Begone!" repeats the chorus of performers.

"Adieu, King of Magnesia!" sings the composer; "heaven prosper thee as an apothecary, if not as a sovereign."

"Never mention his play to me again," gasps the *primo uomo*, sinking into a chair and pressing his much-scented handkerchief to his lips; "never mention his name, or I shall break a bloodvessel."

The poet stops at the top of the stairs, where he feels tolerably safe.

"And this," he exclaims, "this is the sort of being, of worm, of lowest of man-

kind, which disposes of the fate of the drama! Oh, Times! Oh, Muses! Oh, Italy! Oh, Poetry!"

Of course I am not at all prepared to pretend that the particular opera poet whose adventures are thus unfolding themselves in my mind, was actually Antonio Sografi; but, as the mediæval biographers of saints are wont to say, while I cannot affirm that this is fact, it pleases me to think that it very likely was. At any rate, a prologue in reality of this kind seems to explain, to introduce with great naturalness Sografi's own play, whether he have ultimately put in that horse, arranged the pathetic scene in prison, taught the Neapolitan composer the right quantity of the words, given an exactly equal number of verses and dramatic situations (as well-regulated poets should) to the *seconda donna* and the *secondo uomo*, taught acting to the subordinate characters, run errands for the composer, the ballet master, the tailor and hairdresser,

and made himself generally poetically useful; or whether he have carried off the MS. of Anaximander, King of Magnesia, and in a fit of tragic despair sold it for a sausage to the grocer round the corner. For the *Convenienze Teatrali*, which is an admirable play, and as much droller than the scene depicted by myself as a real comedy must be droller than common life, is obviously the revenge of the opera poet. The Count is there, the scene-painter, the *seconda donna*, the *secondo uomo*, the German tenor, the Neapolitan composer, the Venetian Impresario are all there. But two great changes have taken place. The regular poet has been dismissed, and replaced by a cobbler, who make sonnets for love-sick ladies' maids; and the *primo uomo*, the insolent *primo uomo*, is eclipsed, driven to the wall, trampled upon by a *prima donna* more magnificent and sensitive than himself. Indeed, the play, throughout its hubbub of squabbles of *seconde donne* jabber-

ing Milanese and Bolognese, of ballet masters who can dance their *pas seul* only in E flat, of Impresario and composer pulled and pushed in every possible direction, imploring and swearing respectively in Venetian and in Neapolitan—the real action in all this is the utter humiliation by the *prima donna* of the miserable *primo uomo*, at whose name she is seized with a kind of sickened contempt. And the height of all things is when, he having secured his pathetic situations from the poet, having ordered his dress, as Roman general, of white and faded rose colour, and having extorted from the composer his grand *rondò* in his pet tonality of *De-La-Sol-Re*, with the understanding that, although victorious by the fate of arms, he is to sing it in the third act with nice shining, clanking chains on, the better to move the ladies in the boxes—when, I say, he has obtained all that his rank gives a right to, the *prima donna*, terrifying Impresario, poet, com-

poser, tailor and all, sweeps away from him all these inestimable prerogatives; appropriates for her part all the *primo uomo's* pathetic situ s for her costume the *primo* white and faded rose colour, her iniquities by snapping the *primo uomo's* *rondò* in and announcing that she, a ll sing it, chains, *De-La-Sol-Re*, and all, at the end of the third act.

What, you will ask, has all this story of the opera poet of the Fair of Lodi to do with Curiazio, much less with Wagner's *Tristram*, which was what we began talking about? With regard to *Tristram*, we shall get to it presently, and you must have patience for the moment. As to Curiazio, the connection is explained in one minute. This same Antonio Sografi, whom we have chosen to identify with that particular opera poet of Lodi, did not write merely the very amusing comedy of the *Convenienze Tea-*

*trali;* since in 1796 was performed at Venice, with music by Domenico Cimarosa, his grand three-act heroic opera entitled *The Horatii and Curiatii*, one of the most successful works of the whole eighteenth century, and which, in the opinion of contemporaries, showed Cimarosa as great a composer in the serious style as his *Matrimonio Segreto* had shown him in the comic. Of this opera, the *Horatii and Curiatii*, the hero, the chief interest, the pinnacle of perfection, is that same Curiazio whose name, attached to those five notes of recitative, had so unaccountably intruded into the midst of my impressions of Wagner's opera, awakening in me that vague movement of sympathy so strangely contrasting with my indifference to the misfortunes of the Lord of Lyonesse and the Queen of Cornwall. The play, thus set to music by the Italian Mozart, is merely an adaptation to operatic purposes of Corneille's tragedy of *Les Horaces:* the Horatii and

Curiatii are on the point of being united by the marriage of Horatia, the daughter of the old Horatius, with the youngest of the three war between Rome and bursts out, and, to avoid dshed, the two kings det heir dispute by the coml Roman brothers against the t rothers; two of the Horatii are slaughtered at once, but the third, Marcus Horatius, returns single handed and overcomes the three Curiatii in succession; then, irritated at the lamentations and reproaches with which he is received by his sister, he stabs her among the blood-stained spoils of her lover, Curiatius. Anything more solemn, more sternly, savagely tragic than this subject it would, as every one must agree, be quite impossible to find; it is the typical patriotic and military tragedy of early Rome, in its brutal grandeur the most Roman tale of any. A tale, moreover, which you would say that

those men of 1796, whose ears were full of the roar of a republic more tragic, more terrible, more irresistibly conquering than Rome itself, must have understood even better than ourselves, feeling it made modern, akin to themselves, by the fears or the hopes, the enthusiasm and awe of that moment when the canon of Arcole and Rivoli were being dragged across the Alps. Hence, if ever the play of Corneille might find worthy musical expression, it should certainly have been on that occasion, when the greatest of living Italian composers set his notes to Sografi's *Horatii and Curiatii*. But it was not so: of that terrible legendary Rome, of that terrible conquering Republic of '96, there is, in the opera of Cimarosa, not the slightest suggestion. More potent on the fancy of the great composer than the ferocious legend of the past, than the ferocious realities of the present, was the inspiration of that world of tyrannical *prima donnas* and coxcomb

*primo uomos*, of shoemaker poets and accommodating managers, that world of the *Convenienze Teatrali*, with its exquisitely trained v[illegible] elegant music, its conte[illegible]ography, possibility, its [illegible]matic propriety, its Ron[illegible]s of white and faded ro[illegible]*ondòs* with well-polished cn[illegible]c of Cimarosa, so far from being sternly savage, is merely ridiculously lovely. And of this music the part of the murdered Curiatius is the concentration, the very perfection of loveliness and absurdity. Music which, alas! the many delicate recitatives, the beautiful *rondò* (whether or not with chains *obbligati*), the many delightful scraps in concerted pieces, the exquisite duet with Horatia, the famous air *Quelle Pupille tenere*, which, tender and brilliant by turns, and always inimitable, was for years the despair and the pride of all the greatest Italian singers—all this, alas! long supplanted by other things,

grown too difficult for coarse modern performers, for coarse modern audiences, is now utterly forgotten; so that I can scarcely hope that one of my readers may connect with these names anything beyond a mere blank. Well, I was going to say, that forgotten as is now the music of the *Horatii*, nay, inaccessible except in musical archives, I must attempt, though it can never be satisfactorily done in words, to give some approximate notion, by means of much comparison and metaphor, of the musical peculiarities which made this part of Curiatius such a masterpiece of utter dramatic incongruity and insanity.

Those, therefore, to whom my poor Curiazio can never be more than a mere name, I would entreat to summon up all their recollections of the only surviving scion of the old race of operatic heroes of the eighteenth century, of the last stragglers from the times of *rondòs with chains* and white and faded rose-coloured uniforms, the

Arsace of Rossini's *Semiramide*. We all of us know Arsace—the slender and beardless young creature who commands the Assyrian forces, canopied in [illegible]eatest glory of vocal embroidery and br[illegible]cade which has ever fallen to [illegible] of [illegible]general-in-chief; who, with his [illegible] fig[illegible]e and woman's voice brov[illegible]nbled Assyrian grandees, enthrals the heart of Semiramis, and then showers down upon the murderers of his father a perfect firework of vocal rockets and catherine wheels. Well, Arsace may give us some idea of Curiazio, but merely as would the shadow of the substance. For Curiazio is to a far higher extent all the things which constitute Arsace; he is younger, slimmer, more utterly beardless, more completely like a woman, more exquisite, more beautiful, more utterly unmanly, unheroic, undramatic, untragic. Compared with him Arsace is already a compromise with the bellowing, bouncing, bearded protagonist of the modern

opera. Arsace is a half measure, an imperfect creature, almost a hybrid. To begin with, Curiazio is a good fourth higher in the musical scale; Arsace is only a contralto, Curiazio is a complete and exquisite soprano; where, in particularly dreadful moments, Arsace would rumble down into the deepest notes of his voice, Curiazio swings—nay, rather flies up to the very seventh heaven of vocal deliciousness, descending at most but a very little, dropping from the highest note to the less high with something of the sound of a sigh, and somewhat of the movement of a flower folding up at dusk. Where Arsace is wrathful, Curiazio is merely tender; where Arsace is emphatic, Curiazio is sprightly; when Arsace is ominous, Curiazio is jubilant; and where Arsace extends (musically speaking) his arm in a movement of awe-stricken terror, Curiazio trips through the nimblest of his minuets; in short, wherever Arsace slightly draws nearer

to one's ordinary conception of a man and a soldier, Curiazio becomes more and more completely the beautiful young woman dressed up, in shining and glittering tissues and gew-gaws, as the Sir Pink of Perfection, the Prince Charming of a fairy tale.

Such is our Signor Curiazio, daintiest and brightest and lightest of all vocal ancient Romans that ever were; most ideal product of the utterly undramatic Italian musical world of the late eighteenth century, of which we have just seen a few of the grotesque realities. And delightful as he is himself, he becomes absolutely comic when brought into connection with war and fratricide, with Roman sternness and savageness: the smile of pleasure with which we greet him is infallibly tinged with a considerable amount of amusement. Knowing this much, it is as easy to understand my astonishment when this musical figure from another world suddenly arose in my mind between the tragic figures of Tristram and

Yseult, as it is difficult to explain what mysterious and inappropriate reason suddenly brought home to me, in the midst of Wagner's music, and with that queer vague movement of sympathy, those five notes of recitative linked to the words "*O mio Curiazio!*"

The peculiarity of the whole matter consists in the discrepancy between the thing heard and the thing remembered; between the music of Wagner constantly straining after dramatic effect, and the music of Cimarosa serenely and sweetly overlooking everything of the sort; and the explanation also must, I suspect, be sought for in the fact of a contrast. For since there is no earthly resemblance between Curiazio and Tristram and Yseult, their momentary association, in my mind, must surely have been that of conflict. Conflict most certainly; but what should have called it forth? Given Curiazio and given Tristram, the two sets of ideas must come to

blows; but why should they ever have met? In order to get at the bottom of this I must evidently return once more to the precise moment when this fantastic meeting took place. It was, as I have said, just when I was so strongly conscious of complete absence of interest in Wagner's hero and heroine, of complete indifference to their woes and welfare, that I was suddenly visited by the memory of Curiazio. And with that memory, with those five notes of recitative to which his name was attached, had come a vague emotion of love and regret—almost of pain. The notes were out of the recitative in which, before bursting into abuse of war and Rome and Horatius, the betrothed of Curiatius bewailed the death of her lover; nay, they belonged, I fancy, to the first few instants after her certainty of her lover's death. And the vague emotion which had accompanied those notes in my memory, was, I find, a sort of feeling of sorrow which had

been habitual with me every time that, years ago, I used to read over that scene of Cimarosa's opera: sorrow, regret for poor dead Curiazio, almost as if he had been a real person, whom I had known and cared for. The recollection of his sorrow had come just when I was feeling so utterly indifferent to Tristram and Yseult; it had been the result of contrast, and that bar, "*O mio Curiazio!*" had returned to my mind as if to say, "Yes, it is quite true that these musical folk are nothing to you, but don't imagine yourself to be without a soft corner in your heart for some other musical people." In short, the fact that I could not possibly love or feel sorry about Tristram and Yseult, had called forth the fact that I had loved and been sorry for Curiazio.

And now we come to the really curious part of the matter, which is the question why I should have been indifferent to the one and sorry for the other; indifferent to the ill-fated pair whose involuntary sin had

been well-nigh effaced by their misfortunes and their fidelity, so that the rose bramble which grew out of the grave of Yseult, had travelled till its briar and its flowers had settled also over the body of Tristram, lovers of whom the whole Middle Ages had sung, and whose tale had brooded for years in the mind of the most imaginative musician that has ever lived; and sorry for the preposterous *rococo* Prince Charming, the perfect little Dresden china shepherd, with powdered hair and gilded crook, whom the ignorant, self-sufficient, illitèrate, undramatic poets, composers, *prima donnas*, and *primo uomos*, the grotesque theatrical creatures of the last century, had had the astounding imbecility to present to the world as their notion of a Roman warrior. Thinking over it, I think the answer might be given in one line, only that the answer would involve fresh questions. I am sorry for Curiazio, because Curiazio has an individuality, and I am indifferent to Tristram and Yseult because they have none.

An individuality; that's a very neat word with which to settle the question; but had we not better make sure whether such a thing as a musical individuality really does exist? An individuality means the sum total of all those characteristics, physical, mental, and moral, by which we distinguish one person from another; and to have an individuality is merely another way of saying, to be a person. Now a person is a thing which we can see and touch; which feels and thinks, which, by its words and actions, will produce a certain effect upon our bodies and our souls, which will respond, by similar sensitiveness, to our words and our actions; it is a thing composed of body and soul, which, if not actually present, we can represent by painting or carving, in colours, or stone, or words, its outward appearance and movements, its mode of feeling and thinking.

Such a thing as this, such an individu-

ality or person, we can easily find, not merely in Curiazio, but quite equally in Tristram and Yseult, if we read the words which e[illegible] speaks, and in which [illegible] bretto, is spoken of by [illegible] *personæ*; there is, in the [illegible]f Sografi, in the little h[illegible] Wagner, a man answerin[illegible] of Curiazio, a knight, and a lady, called Tristram of Lyonesse, and Yseult of Cornwall. But what is there in the music of Cimarosa, in the music of Wagner? Strike your pen through the words written under each vocal part, and what remains? Notes, combinations of notes, melodies, harmonies, groupings of voices and instruments, counterpoints, orchestral movements, louds and softs, quicks and slows, music, or rather the recipe for producing music; in all this not a line, or curve, or colour which might give you some notion of the figure and face of either Curiazio, or Tristram, or Yseult;

not a word which might tell you their habits of thought and feeling. Here I know you will interrupt me, insisting that it is these very notes which tell us how each of them thought and felt, and, by implication, to a certain extent, how each of them looked. Nay! be not so sure. There is in each of these combinations of sounds, in each of these musical wholes which we call a piece, a power of awakening in us (owing to some dim and distant train of association, if not in ourselves, then in our remotest ancestors) the more or less distinct impression of some particular state of emotion: the power, as it were, of projecting into our soul the shadowy semblance of joy, or grief, or rage, or tenderness which we ourselves have experienced. This emotion-suggesting power there is, or rather there may be (for frequently there is nothing of the sort), in every piece of music, so that we say of it that it is passionate or calm, or cheerful or

sad. In the music, therefore, we have emotion; but emotion is not he or she who feels it; emotion is not a man or a woman, it is not an individual; and however much we may class under the musical notes the words spoken by Curiazio, by Tristram, or by Yseult, in those notes, in that music, there is neither Curiazio, nor Tristram, nor Yseult; and the proof is that we may replace the words of these individuals by the words of other individuals; to these notes, to this impersonal emotion, we may unite the emotion expressing words of—whom shall we say?—Titus, or Launcelot, or Francesca of Rimini; but however much the two things may affect us simultaneously and similarly, in that music there is no more Titus, nor Launcelot, nor Francesca, than there was Curiazio, or Tristram, or Yseult, than there could be you, or I, or Robinson Crusoe. But if, as would appear, there is personality only in the words of the libretto, but none in the score of the

opera, what becomes of this personality of Curiazio about which we have been laughing? If Curiazio is ridiculous it is merely in Cimarosa's music; and if he cannot exist except in Sografi's poem, why, then, the words being quite sensible, and the music quite beautiful, there being no longer a personality, which can be ridiculous or the contrary, what remains for us to laugh at?

Apparently nothing; and apparently, also, all the character-study which we have made at the expense of this poor ancient Roman of 1796, has been, in good metaphysical language, the criticism of the non-extant. So it would seem. But the hows and whys of music are excessively complicated and misleading: its philosophy is a perfect phantasmagoria of strange things, projected we know not whence, reflected, and reflected again, we can scarcely tell how; and we must therefore not be in such a hurry to suppose that we have been

utterly deluded, or that we have got to the bottom of this question of personality. Let us face it again; or rather let us attack it from another side. And, in order to do so, let us deal with concrete examples, and no longer with mere abstract theories.

Well, some time ago I heard, for the first time since my childhood, Palestrina's great Mass of Pope Marcellus; and I was much struck at finding that my impressions of this music differed only in their definiteness and more thorough understanding, from the impressions which years ago I used to experience when listening, a thin and long-legged little savage of twelve, amidst the crowd in the Pope's Chapel. The music was all about nothing at all. I can quite remember my childish wonder at the way in which this music went on. At that incessant movement which never leads anywhere, that incessant crossing of lines which are not woven together, to which I used to listen with the sort of dull surprise

with which I might have watched the constant fluctuation, moving forwards and backwards, intertwining and loosening of lines, in the eddies made by a river against a bridge pier: there is shape and there is none, there is movement we know not in which direction, and we grow dizzy and drowsy in watching. It seemed as if those many years had never been, as if that might still be the selfsame performance uninterrupted since I was a child; all the difference was that I understood that the floating about of the different parts in strange disconnection, the constant movement of the phrase backwards upon itself, the reabsorption, at it were, into a limbo of sounds of the half-developing form, was due to the timid harmony of the Renaissance, afraid even to overstep the limits of one tonality, and consequently sending every incipient modulation back to its starting-point; that the impossibility of all this leaving a melody in the ear was due to something very akin

to the impossibility of two straight lines constituting a figure. Thus much I was the wiser, but only thus much, and my feeling[illegible]ne. I felt once more [illegible]h the ear catches hold [illegible]a distinct movement [illegible]y disappointed), the [illegible] disgust at the appar[illegible]ibly dissolved as soon as noticed; the excitement of the short scale movements upwards and downwards, which seemed, in the midst of this chaos, like exquisite exotic melodies. It went on and on and on, and round and round for ever, sometimes soft, sometimes loud, but ever the same, without limits; an eddying and whirling of strains perpetually revolving upon themselves; parts crossing and recrossing only to remain for ever isolated like disconsolate spirits wandering past each other, or stars moving about in crowded solitude; the music, if ever there was such, of the in-

finite and the impersonal. Why, you will say, your description of Palestrina's Mass sounds uncommonly like your description of Wagner's opera; you are a very odd individual to be thus similarly impressed by compositions which stand, so to speak, at the two opposite ends of musical history. And it is exactly because I knew that there would be such a resemblance, and that such a resemblance would startle you, that I brought the two descriptions before you. In the three centuries which separate the composition of the *Missa Papæ Marcelli* and the composition of *Tristan and Isolde* lies the whole development of modern music. Harmony (for it was the timidity of harmony which cramped all other things), modulation, melody, accompaniment, dramatic recitation, rhythmical and figured effect, orchestration—all these things have utterly changed or arisen altogether in that interval. Monteverde, Carissimi, Scarlatti, Porpora, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schu-

bert, and Schumann, all these have come and done their something new; and while in the second half of the sixteenth century stringed instruments were only beginning to be scientifically constructed, wind instruments were no better than troopers' fifes and bugles, and a single dissonance was eluded, circumvented, and shirked with all the ingenuity of mankind; in the second half of the nineteenth century an orchestra exists which is not merely a vast assemblage of every kind of instrument, but a marvellous new instrument, of marvellous mysterious tone in itself; and there is not a dissonance so fearful that cannot be prepared and arranged and dwelt on and resolved; there is no modulation from tonality to tonality too distant, too bold, too sudden, too astonishing not to be executed almost as easily as a movement from dominant to tonic. Yet, despite this infinite difference in the ways and means which have produced them, the mass by Palestrina and the opera

by Wagner leave the same sort of impression; they are both of them music of the infinite, music about nothing at all, music without personality. Before resuming our difficult attempts at analyzing personality, let us try and discover upon what points of similarity of nature can possibly depend this similiarity of effect in such very different compositions. We may briefly recapitulate the things in which Tristram differs most completely from the Mass of Pope Marcellus. In Tristram we see the latest development of modern music, in the Mass its earliest one; in Tristram the conception of music as an auxiliary of poetry reaches the highest point, in the Mass there is not even the faintest trace of such a notion as musical suggestiveness; in Tristram we find modulation of the most amazing boldness, and orchestration of the most marvellous complexity; in the Mass we find modulation scarcely in rudiment, and orchestration wholly ignored. But in

both we find—what I have noted first in the one then in the other—a certain vagueness and aimlessness, an absence of distinct and tho themes; in *Tristram* r which are never exactly never completely differe musical swirls and eddies to lead somewhere and fin . How is this? From what I have said it may perhaps have struck you that Wagner, with his astounding freedom of modulation, may occasionally modulate too much, as Palestrina, with his singular timidity of modulation, certainly modulates too little; that Wagner, with his constantly fluctuating rhythm, may cease to be rhythmical, as Palestrina, with his very rudimentary rhythm, can scarcely be said to have begun to be rhythmical; that the result of over-modulation and of insufficient modulation, the result of too variable rhythm and of too invariable rhythm, may, on the whole, be

the same; nay, that from the desire of suggesting too many ideas and emotions, may result the same vagueness as from the indifference to suggesting anything at all; in short, that as the malleable clay will represent no recognizable figure if insufficiently manipulated by the sculptor, so also will it represent no recognizable figure if the sculptor have manipulated it in all manner of contrary ways; that, in short, as a sculptor may efface his work, and reduce it once more to a mere chaotic lump, so also a musician may, by too great variety of modulation and of rhythm, reduce his compositions to the formless condition in which they are left by absence of rhythm and modulation. Extremes touch, and contrary excesses lead but to the same result: failure. Over-development and insufficient development of musical means and methods are equally fatal to art, to form; and in Wagner, as in Palestrina, what we miss is that which

remains impressed upon the mind, that of which so many a lesser composer has left us a perfect and unalienable heritage: a musical fo[illegible]a will say, that's all very w[illegible]ve been talking, not about [illegible]ut about musical personality [illegible]think me very paradoxi[illegible]hen we have got to musi[illegible]ve got also to musical personality, for they are in reality one and the same thing. This seems very odd, but let me explain my meaning. We came to the conclusion, a little while ago, that in music separated from words there is no possible personality; that the notes, however inspiring of this or that emotion, constitute, in their combination, not a person, but a musical composition. This seemed at one moment to knock all musical personality completely on the head. But music, as I before remarked, is a mysterious art, and full of manifold delusions; an art altogether different from

any other. Let us imagine that we are looking at a picture; in so doing, we unconsciously describe that picture to ourselves, we make a kind of inventory of its constituent elements, which we keep by us, and to which we constantly refer in future; well, suppose we are making such an inventory. We say, for instance, there is a piece of stuff arranged in five folds, and its colours are blue and yellow; there is a tree, which is sere and brown; its branches are big, its trunk short; the horizon behind it is very low. In so doing, we are merely recognizing in the work of art things and qualities with which we are familiar in nature; the tree, the stuff, the horizon, all this exists quite independent of any painter who may choose to copy it, and this tree is brown, this stuff blue and yellow, this horizon is low, these branches are thick, exactly in the same sense that other things in real existence are brown, blue, yellow, low, or thick. Now compare with this manner of

cataloguing the elements of a work of art, the manner in which you would describe, however technically, a piece of music: you would say, this piece is of a broad rhythm, and consists of phrases which are alternately rough and smooth; it begins with a weighty passage very low down, and gradually works its way up to a certain height. There is nothing at all fantastical in this, or imaginative, any more than when an Italian musician says of a performance: "It can't succeed, because they have no good *white voices*," meaning trebles; or cries at an unlucky pupil, "Don't tighten!" intimating thereby that he ought not to play so fast. Yet nearly every one of these words, of which we are obliged to make daily use, are merely metaphorical expressions. The characteristics of music are unknown except in music, and have no nomenclature of their own; so that we are simply reduced to applying to musical qualities the names of qualities which can have no musical

existence. For there are not in the domain of sound qualities such as breadth, weight, roughness, or smoothness, all of which are inseparable from tangible objects; nor can there be high or low where there is no existence in space; a high voice is as little really high as it is really white, and a white voice no more exists, in reality, than a pink, blue, or yellow voice. Such is the poverty of musical phraseology even in the simplest technicalities; the qualities are perceived as quite separate, but they are conceived in the terms of other classes of things. Now in mere technical matters this metaphorical language produces no further consequences. But when it comes to the general effects of music, to the character no longer of mere single sounds, or groups of sounds, but of whole pieces to the impression not merely upon the ear but upon the mind, we get into an inextricable confusion. As the more elementary qualities of music borrow (perhaps

from some obscure similarity in the effect on our nerves) their names from the qualities of visible and tangible objects, so the large impressions [illegible]acible by music, have had applied to [illegible] (probably from the resemblance of c[illegible] musical effects to the natural modes of e[illegible]xpression of this or that state of feeling, making us now slow and subdued in our speech, now rapid and boisterous), the nomenclature of our conditions of soul. Certain musical effects possess, as we have already remarked, the power of dimly suggesting this or that kind of feeling; but the music is not the state of feeling: it is the music, and nothing else, as we may easily see by trying to describe merely according to such moral characters, say the various pieces of Schubert's *Schöne Müllerin*. If we say "the melancholy piece," we do not in the least distinguish between three or four different songs, since their identity lies not in this melancholy character, but in their particular combination of notes.

But for such combinations of notes as constitute musical identity we are simply without names, and we are therefore obliged to speak of, to think of various pieces of music in a language quite as figurative as when we say that one man has a hard mind and another a hot temper, the hardness of mind and the hotness of temper being very different to the hardness of a hard pear, or the hotness of a July day. So the more we attempt to describe music to ourselves and to others, the more completely do we get into the habit of talking of music as having a nature which it simply has not got. We think of music, nay we perceive it, in a state of perfect metaphorical jumble. And hence it is that the quality of definiteness of musical form, the something which does not yet exist in Palestrina and has well-nigh ceased to exist in Wagner, becomes in our mind unconsciously confused and identified with definiteness of musical personality; we say,

where we miss it, "This music is all about nothing at all," when in reality no music ever can be about anything at all, and our real me: This music has got nc you begin to see what aid that musical indiv form were one and tl n I persisted in talking kind of musical personality, while I was perfectly aware that no personality can really exist in music, however much it may exist there for our fancy?

Well, if there appears to us to exist a degree of personality even in a sonata or symphony performed upon mere wordless string, ivory, or brass; think what it must be when a piece of music has welded into it words descriptive of this or that state of emotion; and when music and words come from the lips of a man or a woman on the stage, dressed to represent a given person, and doing his or her utmost to make us

believe, with look and gesture, that the real person is actually before us. The impressions whirl round in our brain in utter confusion. Music, words, dress, and gesture unite, and we cease to know what is what. If, then, the man or woman on the stage sings those words to music which gives us a sense of clearness, of separateness from other music, of co-ordination and completeness in itself, it must inevitably seem to us that this clearness, completeness, separateness is cognate to the moral nature of the living man or woman, to the nature of those human words; we think of it as individuality of character. The well-defined melody becomes, in a manner, the well-defined character of him who sings it; nay, the phrase of music which is poignant to our musical sense nearly always conveys to our mind a certain pathos of poignant emotion. Thus, there are certain effects in duets, especially in those old-fashioned ones between voices of similar pitch, which,

when the two parts touch, embrace, cling to one another, come in contact with painful intensity of dissonance, which must inevitably [illegible] of souls meeting only t[illegible] of a human farewell, e[illegible] Rossini's *Giorno d'Orror*[illegible]ore, does musical perso[illegible] mere phantom, come[illegible]ike many another phantom) for our fancy and our affections; thus can we feel, towards what is merely the poignancy of loveliness, a quite human kind of sympathy; we can love, and almost desire to serve on account of their beauty, what are in reality merely arrangements of melodies and harmonies, but of which we think as the heroes or heroines of Gluck or Mozart or Schubert. And finally, for this reason can there really exist for me a Curiazio of Cimarosa, whom, quite unconsciously, I invest with a character analogous to that dainty, brilliant, tender, Prince Charming kind of music, and whom, as a

delightful piece of dramatic incongruity, I ridicule and love.

Yes; I am fond of Curiazio; he amuses me, but he attracts me; he gives me pleasure; above all, I can perceive him, can know when he is and is not there; he is musical flesh and blood; has a musical face and eyes, into which I can look; he has a musical personality. And Tristram and Yseult, I say once more, have none; are mere dim spectres, confused with each other, and confused with all things about them. Why? Because the music which Wagner has composed on to the words expressive of their vicissitudes and of their feelings, is, even like the music of Palestrina's great Mass, music insufficiently distinct in form; music of the infinite; music all about nothing at all; music without personality. And for this reason, therefore, the most imaginative and emotional of all composers, the man whose whole life has been one long meditation on

the weirdness and pathos of mediæval romance, one constant effort to bring them home to us with his music; this man, therefore, has failed, where an utterly unthinking composer, or rather the grotesque world of Sografi's *Convenienze Teatrali* has succeeded; succeeded even to the extent of sending their absurd and charming Curiazio into my mind when it should have been flooded with the thought of Tristram and Yseult.

But what, after all, is the meaning of this liking for Curiazio, this affectionate remembrance of a certain number of familiar tunes? It is not sympathy with suffering, it is not admiration for heroism; it is merely the regretful recollection of a musical pleasure, of the unreasoning, unsympathizing pleasure in certain combinations of melodies and harmonies. It is, say the partizans of Wagner, the low material preference of a mere epicure, to whom music is but a kind of more diaphanous cook's or

perfumer's art. To say that Wagner has failed in exciting such feelings as these, is to say that he has not done what he would scorn to do. The great dramatic mission of music consists for him not in exciting a liking for ridiculous effeminate *rococo* heroes on account of the pretty little *ariettas* and *rondos* which they may sing, but in overwhelming the souls of the hearers with that terrific flood of passion upon which Fate has cast the souls of Tristram and Yseult, to be whirled and submerged like reeds or straws; what Wagner would bring home to you is not the love of this person for that person, the petty loves of Signor Curiazios and Signora Orazias, but love itself in all its fearful irresistibleness. This certainly does sound much grander than merely making one like Signor Curiazio; and yet I am not so sure about it. I do not mean to refer to my individual self, having remained unmoved and decidedly wearied by this *Tristram*

music, while a large proportion of other musically-endowed persons were doubtless in a very different condition. For it is a fact, the r[illegible]ch would greatly facilitate the [illegible] of the Wagner question [illegible]ssumption, made by the [illegible]he opponents of Wagner, [illegible]te party is prejudiced [illegible] is a fact, then, that there exist two distinct kinds of musical sensitiveness, which neither exclude nor necessitate one another. The first is the essentially musical sensitiveness to musical form, the faculty of receiving pleasure from the musically beautiful; the second is what I should call the nervous sensitiveness to the emotional effects of music — the faculty of being moved, not by musical beauty, but by that emotion-inspiring property possessed to some degree by all music, and by certain music to a quite amazing extent. It is evident then that, in attempting to decide whether it is really

much finer to bring home to the hearer the tremendous gale of passion in which wave and are tattered the souls of Tristram and Yseult, than to inspire us with a liking for some Signor Curiazio—it is evident, or ought to be, that we must accept as true what only our prejudice can deny namely: that although Wagner's music may fail to move ourselves, it may fully succeed in moving a large proportion of our neighbours; and it is not our own stolid weariness, but their half-intoxicated excitement, which we must compare in point of nobility with the kind of satisfaction derived from the placid music of Cimarosa or Mozart.

The nobility or baseness of any work of art, or of any artistic effect is, in the first instance, a matter of superiority or inferiority entirely within the limits of the particular art whereunto appertains that work or that effect. It is a question of the greater or lesser intensity of pleasure which that work or effect can produce. From this point of view

it seems to me obvious that even a partizan of Wagner must admit that if we are, during an hour or so, painfully excited by the mu[illegible] which no very distinct [illegible]nly very vague impre[illegible] afterwards, this *Trist*[illegible]nferior, from the mere [illegible]-giving point of view, [illegible] Mozart, which, without greatly stirring our emotions, delights us during performance, and leaves in our memory a never-failing stock of musical pleasure. But when we ask whether it is higher to make us momentarily participate in the passionate condition of Wagner's lovers, or to give us an abiding musical satisfaction in Cimarosa's hero, we are in reality shifting the ground of dispute from æsthetics to ethics. The question is no longer which music can give the keener and more durable musical pleasure; but which condition of soul is the higher with reference to the moral and intellectual nobility of our lives,

feelings, and actions: the condition of soul implied by a liking for Curiazio because he sings charming airs; or the condition of soul implied by a momentary participation due to the emotional power of Wagner's music, in the passion of Tristram and Yseult? The answer would seem to be that since we are generally agreed that the interest which we take in a tragedy of Shakspeare's is of a higher and more ennobling order than the interest which we take in a quartet by Haydn; the condition of soul produced by Wagner's music must also be higher and more ennobling than the condition of soul produced by Cimarosa's music; since the first excites in us actual passion, while the second merely occasions musical pleasure. This answer seems obvious, and to Wagnerists is doubtless conclusive. But let us examine why the interest in Shakspeare's play is really of a higher sort than the interest in Haydn's quartet; and wherein consists the differ-

énce between the two sorts of interest. The interest in Shakspeare's play implies a high state of activity of our reason and our syı [illegible] it every moment, intelle [illegible] e casual connection b [illegible] actions, and fate of the [illegible] we are, at the same ti [illegible] mpathizing with their ı [illegible] good, disliking the bad, pitying [illegible] weak, wishing we could resist the unjustly strong; whereas we are, during the performance of Haydn's quartet, merely following the intricate arrangements of notes, the sequences of harmony and of melody. The pleasure in both cases may be equal; but the exercise of our intellect and of our moral sympathies in the one case, is much more conducive to our right thinking, feeling, and acting in real life, than is the exercise of our mere faculties of musical form; and on this superior practical effect upon our judgment and conduct depends, and depends solely,

the greater moral nobility of the tragedy by Shakspeare than of the quartet by Haydn. Now let us apply this test of the super-artistic nobility of works of art to the music of Wagner and the music of Cimarosa. In listening to the songs which constitute that famous part of Signor Curiazio, only our faculties of musical form are active; we are merely perceiving beautiful combinations of notes; and our power of judging of how and why, of right and wrong, our tendency to behave well to our neighbours, is exactly the same after the performance as it had been before, save that we feel perhaps a little better pleased with life, a little reposed and refreshed before resuming its troubles. But with the *Tristram* music it is different; different, I mean, of course, to such of us (and I will try and imagine that it is all of us) as are capable of being moved by it, as Wagner intended us to be moved. We are, let us say, during the performance of the marvellous

garden duet, extremely moved; we are unconscious of the theatre, of the spectators, of the actors; almost of the music and almost for notes, combination ies, melodies— all these appeared, have melted peared also has our pa future—all the things nk, after which we strive, all gone, forgotten. There remains, so to speak, only a something within ourselves which is vibrating, quivering, vaguely wanting, receiving, giving, hungering and thirsting, fainting and gasping, and uprising and shaking at we know not what closed gates; there remains a something outside ourselves which is sweeping across us, sending streams of anguish through the bare nerves of our soul, pouring upon them a quite heavenly balm; chilling us at one moment, and making us burn at another; shaking like an impetuous wind; rocking, submerging

us, like a soft wave. Besides this, a vision, a sort of passing glorified sense of the presence of Tristram and Yseult, whom we love; nay, we do not love them, we love with them. They are in us, and we are in them. Love, but how? Not certainly as we love Desdemona, or Juliet, or Miranda; not even as we love some beautiful soulless statue for its more visible loveliness; not anything like that. In this there is neither sympathy with virtue, nor admiration for beauty; there is merely what there is in Tristram and Yseult themselves, and by what name should we call that? As they love one another, so do we seem to love with them; the buzz of their blood is in our ears, the palpitation of every one of their arteries is throughout our own bodies, the choking of their voice is in our throats. Through ourselves runs a bodily tremor and convulsion of passion communicated by the hurrying violin phrases, the sighing horns, and panting

hautboys, by the throbbing (as of blood in the temples) of the basses in the orchestra, all rushing up to subside in long tremulous ripples, turned to slowly swaying waves of sound, through which, every now and then, well up the broken harp chords. Ourselves, the music, Tristram, Yseult, whither disappeared? We know not; there remains but this strange mist of passion, these narcotic fumes, in which there is the height of pain and pleasure and forgetfulness, wreathing, swirling out of the music of Wagner as out of some magic censer, rising to our brain, to numb and intoxicate.

A wonderful power this, on the part of music and musician, and one which quite transcends the mere petty power of giving pleasure to all the older composers, the mere petty power of awakening sympathy of all the dramatists that ever were. But while this performance lasts, and as long as lasts its spell upon our minds, how is it with our soul? Is it, as it would be by some

piece of ordinary music, merely reposed and refreshed in the journey and battle of life? Is it made stronger, keener, and more supple to deal with true and false and right and wrong, as it would be by some written tragedy? I fear not. That passion, without object or motive, blind, if passion ever was, deaf and sterile, communicated to our soul by the mysterious power of Wagner's music, shakes and unsettles it, weakens our mental and moral muscle, making it incapable of resistance in the present, less capable of resistance in the future. If it be true that the dignity of any art in our lives may be measured by the degree to which it increases our power of coping with the difficulties and agitations to which our soul is exposed; may we not ask, if, during the performance of such music, we were suddenly put in presence of some great decision to make, or some great temptation to resist—Should we be more or less fitted to make the right

choice, or take the right course, while our soul was enervated and excited with the empty visions and barren passions with which, like a subtler alcohol, such music had filled it? Let every one answer this question for himself; to me it seems to admit of but one answer.

And, thinking over all this, and reverting to the point from which I started in these most vagabond of musical dissertations, it seems to me, that, although the music of the *Orazi* is quite forgotten of mankind, and although it certainly is very odd to think of such a soprano-singing, minuet-tripping, white-and-faded rose-coloured Roman hero as that Roman hero of 1796; it is, after all, more fine and noble, than trumpery and laughable, to have been able to send into my mind, while the whole passion of *Tristram and Yseult* was overwhelming the hearts of my neighbours, that affectionate and regretful remembrance of Signor Curiazio.

CHRISTKINDCHEN.



## CHRISTKINDCHEN.

At the bottom of my heart I believe in it still; in that dear little child with tiny, trotting feet beneath its nightgown, carrying the green fir-tree loaded with gilt nuts, garlands of glass beads, and innumerable tapers, the yellow light of which merges in the pale gold of the halo surrounding the little blond head. I have a sneaking belief in it still, that Baby Christ, Christkindchen as I was taught to call it by my German nurses, who brings presents to good little children — golden apples, gingerbread wrapped in silver foil, strung-up dolls, boxes of leaden soldiers,—doubtless because it remembers, up there in heaven, how pleased it was when the dear

Kings from the East, the nice grandpapa with the snow-white beard, the fair-haired prince who looked like a young lady, and the good nigger smiling with all his thirty-six strong white teeth, brought to the stable at Bethlehem the embroidered garments, the jars of myrrh, the caskets full of frankincense.

I continue to believe in that Christ-kindchen, as people believe in such things as are always expected and yet never come: as the hungry poet believes in immortality while printing verses which no one ever reads; as there believed in the return of her bridegroom that damsel of the fairy tale, going daily to the window and closing it again, saying gently, "He'll come to-morrow," until she grew to be an old, old woman of ninety, and there came to fetch her, no longer the bridegroom, but Death in his grey armour and mounted on his grey horse; I believe in it as I believe in eventual fame and fortune . . . no, I be-

lieve in it only a very little, but I believe in it sincerely.

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Towards Christmas there was always heaps of snow. I used to watch it, till my head span, falling in solid flakes, close together and yet each separate, in the white air, always slanting as they came down, as if sown by invisible sowers; the explanation being, as I was informed by my nurse, that the miller and the baker were quarreling in heaven. On the bank of the ponds the skaters were beginning to cautiously try the ice, putting down gingerly one foot, then the other on that crackling, steelly polish, thinly powdered with white frost; or pitching stones which shattered the middle of the pond, shivering the ice that rebounded in bluish fragments, and sending up, as they flopped in, a spirt of pale-blue water. On the puddles and the gutters the street boys were sliding in long

rows, balancing themselves with their up-raised, green-gloved paws. Every now and then came the tinkle of bells, and a sledge passed, rapid and silent like a shadow. There was an unusual splendour in the shop windows of that sleepy German town, particularly the stationers and grocers, on account of the sheets of coloured tissue paper, the gold leaf for gilding the nuts and apples, the strings of blue and red glass beads, the packets of delicately tinted tapers, the candies as hard as quartz, the dried figs and prunes, all to be fastened to the Christmas trees. Every morning there was in the market-place a perfect little wood of dwarf fir-trees, bright green spruce, hard as a blacking brush. All of which things filled my head with confused and delightful expectations.

But there was something more fascinating than any shop window done up for Christmas; more fascinating even than the suggestion, perhaps a trifle too obvious and

material, of those fir-trees in the market-place. In various parts of the town, but more especially within the dark archway of an old tower surrounded by butchers' shops, there were wooden tressels, on which were exhibited rows and rows of wooden Christmas lambs. If ever any animal, born of the fancy of man, has had a power over my mind, it has been neither the dragon, nor the unicorn, nor the rok of "The Arabian Nights," nor the lamia, nor the centaur, nor the snark—although I loved them all—but the white sugar, pink-eyed rabbit, who lays the Easter eggs, and this particular little Christmas lamb. I can see them even now, the beloved creatures, in files on the tressels under the old clock tower; they were twice as long as a child's hand, with a barrel-shaped paunch of thick wool, white and curly, and tied round with strips of red and gold paper; four very short toothpicks served for legs, and they had beautiful, majestic

Roman noses. I can't say wherein consisted precisely the peculiar and exquisite grace, the fascination of those fantastic creat[illegible]as the solid way in which [illegible]n those toothpick legs, [illegible], fixed stare of the beac[illegible]de of that Roman nose [illegible] I was so entranced that [illegible] had to drag me viole[illegible]er we passed near that clock tower; and I am by no means sure that even now, were I ever to pass that spot at Christmas time, a little compulsion would not be advisable on the part of my companions. . . . Why, I wonder, should it be so much easier to snatch a sight of the Ideal when we are little, when the whole world seems good and beautiful and full of delightful mysteries, than when, as grown up and recognizing that reality is often sad and ugly and always prosaic and limited, we require the Ideal so sorely? 'Tis one of Nature's pieces of injustice,

and not the least of them. We grown-up folks have got our toys: the Venus of Milo, Raphael's Madonnas, the music of Mozart or of Wagner, the whole poetry of the world, from the Vedic hymns to Austin Dobson; heroes and heroines, great men and beautiful women of the Past and the Present; all so much toy-shop stuff, made on purpose to banish weariness and trouble. But, alas, we have no longer the wooden sheep wound round with wool—the Christmas lambs with the toothpick legs and the glass-bead eyes.

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Of course there was a deal of talk about Christkindchen during all those days, Christkindchen who would bring the Christmas-tree, if I was a good child.

It was strange how firmly I believed in Christkindchen, although I had sundry reasons for doubting of his existence. During the week before Christmas, for instance,

there was no possibility of going into papa's room, through which I usually cared unimpeded. When he went out, he locked the door and carried off the key in his pocket, wherever he was in, and I knew it. Then I gave a dreadful grunt, which showed through the door, stopping up the rest with my inflated face, and the touzled head of him who has been stooping over his work, crying out—"What d'you want?" in such a way that I always slunk off, answering stupidly, sucking my thumb, "Nothing, papa." Meanwhile mysterious parcels would arrive, and be engulfed in that mysterious room. Once I looked through the keyhole: a confused greenness, a sheen of gold and glass met my eyes. And sometimes, returning home in the early dusk, I could see, drawn in black upon the white window blind, the outline of a fir-tree, the sharp apex, the majestic triangular sweep of

the branches; and along with this, the outline of my father's face—the nose, the lock of hair which bobbed when he stooped, the points of his moustaches, the fingers twisting something. . . .

Despite all these questionable circumstances, I continued to believe in Christkindchen. Nay, I was distressed in my mind to understand how that dear little Baby Christ could be in so many places at the same time. That it should come to me, and without inconvenience, I understood; for my mother, for fear I should not eat, had particularly begged it to come after supper, instead of coming, as to other houses, before. But how did Christkindchen contrive to appear in such a lot of houses, quite far from one another on the very stroke of six on Christmas Eve? I was much exercised by this theological mystery, while my nurse took me about through the principal streets to see whether, in any of the lit-up ground floor windows,

there were visible fir branches crushed against the panes, lighted tapers, or at least the highest garland of gilded nuts and glass globe[illegible]p of the spruce green[illegible]

For[illegible]rtainly did come. How[illegible] tree appear suddenly[illegible]e there had been no tr[illegible] And thinking over [illegible]reased the metaphysical difficulty by adding the thought that the visit of Christkindchen was not limited to the houses of one street or even one town, but extended, on the stroke of six, to all the houses in all streets of all the world. Try and grasp that! . . .

"Perhaps there is more than one Christkindchen?" I meditatively propounded.

"You silly!" answered my horrified nurse. "Why how could there be more than one Lord Baby Christ, even if ever so tiny?"

I still continued to believe in Christkindchen, and, after a fashion, I continue to believe in it to this day. The number of Christmases that have gone by since the last one which lit the tapers for me on the bristly fir branches, is a question I don't care to investigate. I am irritated, on the other hand, by the small civilities, the little presents, the bonbons, the Christmas cards, the letters and visits which have come to represent Christmas. There is too little difference between all this and the tips with which depart, doubtless secretly swearing, the baker and butcher's boy, the milkman, the postman, the crossing-sweeper, the smith's assistant, all the creatures who hang on to the housebell at Christmas time.

Yet, for all this, Christmas never comes round without bringing into my mind a vague sort of expectation. Something, I feel, ought to come for me, although I am quite at a loss to say what. And a kind of negative sadness, a very slight heart

tigh ening, comes over me when Christmas goes by, and, as usual, nothing has come. Son unconscious hope, evidently that after all t ilness, Christkind-chen t of my existence, and

O idchen did return. Chr a tiny child with nak white nighty, car-rying lit tapers, but in the figure of that brother or cousin of Love, of the King Love whom Dante met one day in a light wayfaring garb. Christ-kindchen masked as that gentle and tranquil genius, wingless and arrowless, who leads by the hand those whom we love at once and shall love for ever; those for whom this intelligent world has found no name save the same as is given to the bothering creatures who leave visiting cards in the hall and expect to be asked to tea parties.

Yes, it had remembered my existence, that dear little Baby Christ, who under-

stands that we require not merely useful and necessary things, the pots and pans of life, but also superfluities, surprises, presents, embroidered garments, myrrh, incense, friendship, and love. As a result, that vague expectation arising in me with the sound of the bells ringing for Advent grew stronger instead of weaker. Christmas was nearing: a cold, rainy, black Christmas. The air was full of thin rainlike melted ice; after the late daybreak, the early sunset, there remained among the grey cloud masses a sanguine vapour, a crimson magnificence which was not cheerful, but sad rather and ominous. Again there came to me that confused presentiment that something was about to happen. Without knowing it, I began to hope that as in those far-off days, the door would be thrown open to disclose the white shimmer of Christkindchen.

The door did open; and there entered Death. Death not dishevelled and tragic,

who nocks you down and leaves you lying stupe ed, broken, insensible, so that kind folk gather round and touch you gently and talk with compassionate low voices; but I f be seen by you only, and nodding; so that, ed his icy breath into y me your seat as if nothi rking or amusing yours dies every now and again on your lips, the laugh is suddenly strangled in your throat, when the thought comes home of the one who might have entered any day last week or last month, but who will never, never, never, enter that room again. Death who has carried off some one that was not of your kith and kin, with whom you had no ostensible connection; some one whose loss does not give you a right to bore your surroundings.

I was waiting for Christkindchen, and this other one entered. And yet who knows

whether in reality there was not on this occasion a tacit agreement between the little Christ-child and Death? Who knows whether, during that Christmas, that rainy, black Christmas, with its sanguine after-glows, there did not come to me Christkindchen itself, Christkindchen disguised as Death in order to bring me a great solemn gift, the knowledge of my own heart, the love, which is a kind of worship, of such as can feel our love no more?

*Unberufen!* and I knock three times under the table, as they taught me to, in Germany, to ward off bad luck. So let us talk of things more cheerful, or at least, less melancholy.

Enough has been said, perhaps too much, of all that Christkindchen did for me in those far-distant German days. When I was just issuing out of childhood, it brought me a present more magnificent than any other;

perhaps because, as I was about to quit the class, that of the little ones, with which Christkindchen has most dealings, it thought it kind to send me away with a big *consolation prize*. This prize, this wonderful Christmas box, received by me when I was twelve, consisted in a winter passed in Rome.

It was the last year but one of the Temporal Power. The early winter had been nothing but scirocco, that Roman scirocco which fills the sky with melting, watery clouds, and the streets with greasy, slippery mud; and which, in those days, brought into stronger relief the dirt and squalor of that poor and ill-kept town, Scirocco moreover that filled with sadness my poor little nostalgic soul, dreaming of the blue sky, the snowy mountains, the sparkling sea, the sunshine and palm trees, the cheerful, frivolous life of a little Mediterranean city. I had never before seen any antiquities and museums, and under that funereal sky the galleries struck me

as so many icy catacombs full of dead and petrified people; the temples mere heaps of brickwork, where you could scarcely pick your way for filth and nettles. I was wild, in short, to get away; and this vast Rome did not fascinate my small fancy.

Christmas came on, or rather, Advent. In front of the Propaganda, opposite to which we had a lodging, there began to assemble the big gilded and tasselled coaches of the Eminences, who got out, vermilion like pomegranates, between their liveried lacqueys. At various street corners there started out of the earth penitents belonging to all manner of confraternities, uncanny black and scarlet puppets, with eyes sparkling through the holes of the hood, and money-boxes which they jingled without saying a word. The pork-shops began to be hung with heavy garlands of hams and sausages, replacing flowers among the branches of bay, and the ribbons

and [illegible]lt paper. And every morning there rose to my bed, awaking me from some dream of shepherds and kings from the East, the melancholy quavering of the fife, the mo[illegible] the bagpipe. It seeme[illegible]le, all this prosy, every[illegible]ng into a confused fairy [illegible] between sleeping and a[illegible]

Th[illegible]an. I remember the morning when, in the midst of jangling of bells and banging of artillery, they waked me up by candlelight, and helped me into black clothes belonging to my elders (to wear mourning seemed to me highly dignified), and then carried me, crushed in a two-seat cab, to St. Peter's, where I waited for hours among the knees of veiled and black-dressed ladies; hours that seemed an endless dream under this immense cupola, shimmering blue and white and gold, where the sunbeams, through a haze of incense, struck upon the huge golden letters,

"Tu es Petrus." Endless, endless; until at last there echoed through the vastness of the place the quavering notes of the singers, the shrill blast of the trumpets; and there became visible, moving above the heads, above the sheen of the bayonets and the halberts, the great fans of ostrich feathers, the golden tassels of the gently swaying throne, the white splendour of the pontifical robes and jewels. The trumpets shrilled through the cupola, the incense rose in great blue wreaths. I thought of King Solomon when (as I had read in "The Arabian Nights") he passed in review the legions of angels, of djins, and of fairies, obedient to the power of his ring.

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From that moment everything seemed changed. I was wild to be taken to all the ruins, where, among the vine roots and the dry thistle flowers, I hunted for bits of porphyry and *giallo antico*, for scraps of

scarlet and blue plaster hidden under rubbish and weeds. I was wild to be taken into those dark, damp little churches, resplendent with magic garlands and pyramids of lights, and full of the long, sweet, tearful, almost infantine notes of voices, whose strange sweetness seemed to cut into your soul, only to pour into the wound some mysterious narcotic balm. I was wild to be taken to those chilly galleries, where, while the icy water splashed in the shells of the Tritons in the garden, the winter sunshine, white, cold, and brilliant, made the salt-like marble sparkle; and all those gods, all those goddesses, and nymphs, and heroes, all that nude and white and ice-cold world, seemed to seek me with their blank, white glance, smiling with the faint and ironical smile that means—"This creature is ours." And indeed, from that moment, I, poor tiny creature, constituted the most microscopic among the conquests of the world-conquering and heart-subduing city.

And this, this giving me to Rome, or giving Rome to me; this throwing open the doors and displaying, instead of the poor, humdrum fir-tree, strung with gilded nuts and lit up with coloured tapers, that strange, magnificent Christmas gift, that *Bescheerung* (as the Germans say) prepared by all peoples and all centuries—this constituted my last, regular, and authentic relations with the Lord Baby Christ, with Christkindchen who remembers, up there in Heaven, how pleased it was, in the stable of Bethlehem, with the caskets of frankincense, the jars of myrrh, and the golden-bordered garments of the dear kings from the East.





# EPILOGUE.



# EPILOGUE.

REVIEWING what I have written to you, my dear Carlo, by way of preface, and what also constitutes the bulk of this heterogeneous volume, it seems to me I may have been unjust, at least in spirit, to the things which I have designated as "Juvenilia."

Art, music, beautiful nature, poetry, and that queer chaos within our souls of fragmentary and mingled impressions whence all things beautiful arise, into which all things beautiful resolve—all this has in reality but one fault: that it is unequally distributed. The pity of it is that we, a small class, monopolize all of such consoling things,

flashguns made certain

insufficience of fleshpots made certain others, from necessity, as the first from excess, gross, selfish, and cruel also. The saints were grieved (as the stoics had been grieved before them), and took a spite against the fleshpots in general, those of which there were too many in one place, and those of which there were too few in others. They determined never to touch any more of such themselves, and tried to persuade the world to do alike.

Similarly with beautiful things. There is no doubt that we, privileged people, are given too much of them and give them too much of our attention; but that is not saying that in the world at large there is too much of them or too much attention given thereunto. It is an evil of distribution. And one result, let us hope, of our thinking somewhat of matters less pleasant, may be, in the long run, in the long-expected future, which yet sometimes comes with a rush, that the less selfish

work of the world will be no longer the mere removal of evil, but also the distribution of good; and among various sorts of good, one of the best is beauty. That being the case, Juvenilia might safely engross a large part of our life, once having put such Juvenilia into the lives of others, nay, put into them a period of true youthfulness, of serenity and whole-mindedness, which I fear, at present, is as unfairly distributed as art.

Moreover, I am inclined to think that do what we may, we should on no account let the love for mere beauty drop out of our lives, be thrust aside by more serious and generous cares. The love of these Juvenilia means the continuance of youth in ourselves; and although we should not lead a life of unmixed youthfulness, a life without sufficient youthfulness in it is likely to be unprofitable to others as well as to ourselves. After all, the object of all our efforts is merely that other folks' hap-

piness should not be diminished, but rather increased, by our own; and if we torment ourselves too much, fixing our thoughts on only painful subjects, there is no telling but we may get to torment others also; having developed a malignant taste for uncomfortable ideas, like certain bigots of all creeds and absence of creeds, particularly the modern creed of pessimism, to whom the thought of misery becomes as necessary as their dinner or their pipe.

In the words of Wordsworth, and with no baser meaning, besides, "the world is too much with us"—more than is good for us and, in measure, for the world itself. I spoke in the introductory pages of this little book of the days, selfish doubtless, when the questions of art, of beauty, of imagination, the subject matter of these essays, seemed the only ones worth thinking about. There is the possibility of a contrary extreme. I felt it very keenly a little time ago, returning in the autumn weather

to a little Tuscan mountain village which I had not visited for some years, and where I suddenly found myself confronted in a way with a previous and very different myself [illegible] too much with us." Pe[illegible]t mean by the world the [illegible]ests of social life, the [illegible]ration of ways and me[illegible]f us, after a certain age, [illegible]ake a quite needless degree of importance. I mean the hundred interests, persons, places, actions, tendencies, problems, that life forces upon us, that constitute the world, and that come in the line of vision of our seeing and feeling what is beautiful in nature and art. I felt that keenly sitting upon the hillside just outside that Apennine village, looking down between the slopes of chestnuts on the one side, the black and red village roofs among the cypresses on the other, into the valley deep below, spreading itself, like a wide river of yellow haze, to

the feet of the smoke-blue Alps of Modena, while the mountain outlines, from the low wooded hills to the dizzy Carrara crags against the sky, became, as the afternoon advanced, blue and bluer, paler and paler, a pale blue smokiness, fold upon fold, of that particular luminousness which is the supreme and ineffable beauty of the south. I sat there, every green thing that I crushed a scented herb, on a bank above the vineyard and oliveyard, golden and smoke-grey in the low light, with peaceable voices of women and children rising up to me, and the light sound of broken hemp straw. I sat there, in company of my former self, while the mountain ridges grew more and more unsubstantial and luminous under the pale sky, until the sun having set things were reversed, and the sky became pale and diaphanous, the mountains of deeper and deeper solemn hyacinth blue. I sat there, as I said, with my former self, and that line of Wordsworth's kept returning to

my mind. Yes, certainly, the world is too much with us; it interferes with that complete vision of merely simple and pleasant thi[illegible]eing filled with their lov[illegible] and cranny of our nat[illegible] intrusion of baser thi[illegible]hings intrude now, get[illegible]mes and the fulness of [illegible]ather make holes in my [illegible]easure, my serenity, ooze and leak out and be wasted. And these are the things of the world, some noble, others futile or even base, all more or less irrelevant to this: problems, difficulties, projects; the thought of the poor and the rich (each equally unnatural and removed from simple enjoyment); of the deadlocks in people's lives, the hopelessness in their character, the hundred little meannesses and dirtinesses which real detail always implies. It is, in fact, the invasion of the human element. But why should the human element jar upon all beauty?

I scarcely know, but I know that it does, my own and other folks. Beauty, whether of nature or of art, is simple, harmonious, complete; the human element, *the world*, full, even at the best, of dissonance, imperfection, complexity, and enigma, that awaken suspicion and evil thoughts, leaving us, even where it shows handsomest, with a notion that under the surface all is far from beautiful, that there are mixtures of motives, and motives and motors hidden away—drains and dustbins of the soul. Contact with the world, knowledge of human nature, brings up with our wonder and admiration at the strange and sometimes admirable mechanism called man, the acquaintance with a deal of what Michelet, speaking of Montaigne (and he might well have applied the expression to his own works), calls *d'abominables viscères*.

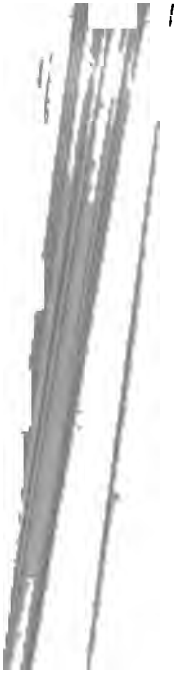
It is for this that we feel purer and stronger for a thorough contact with art and with nature regarded from the artistic standpoint;

for a thorough stripping away of the world, of the reality, including all doubts, troubles, suspicions, and other things that chafe and clog and soil our souls, a stripping away occasionally of all the world including ourselves. We feel purer and stronger. But purity and strength are qualities whose very significance depends upon another life besides that of art; of a life dealing with less pleasant things, a life towards which the life of art stands merely as an interval of refreshment and repose. Do you remember the allegorical figure in Siena Cathedral and my theory of *Juvenilia?* The mature man, to preserve his vigour and value, must hunt and hawk, must pursue the useless as well as the useful. But his business lies with the useful, not with the useless, and the falcon on the wrist remains the symbol, not of the full-grown knight or citizen, but of the immature youth.

We have talked, my dear Carlo, a great

deal about art and all beautiful things; talked of them as our business in life. The time will come, I trust, when we shall talk of them, but of other things besides; when we shall take art more lightly because we shall have taken life more seriously; when we shall recognize with gratitude that *Juvenilia* are *Juvenilia;* and that in this fact lies their legitimacy and use.

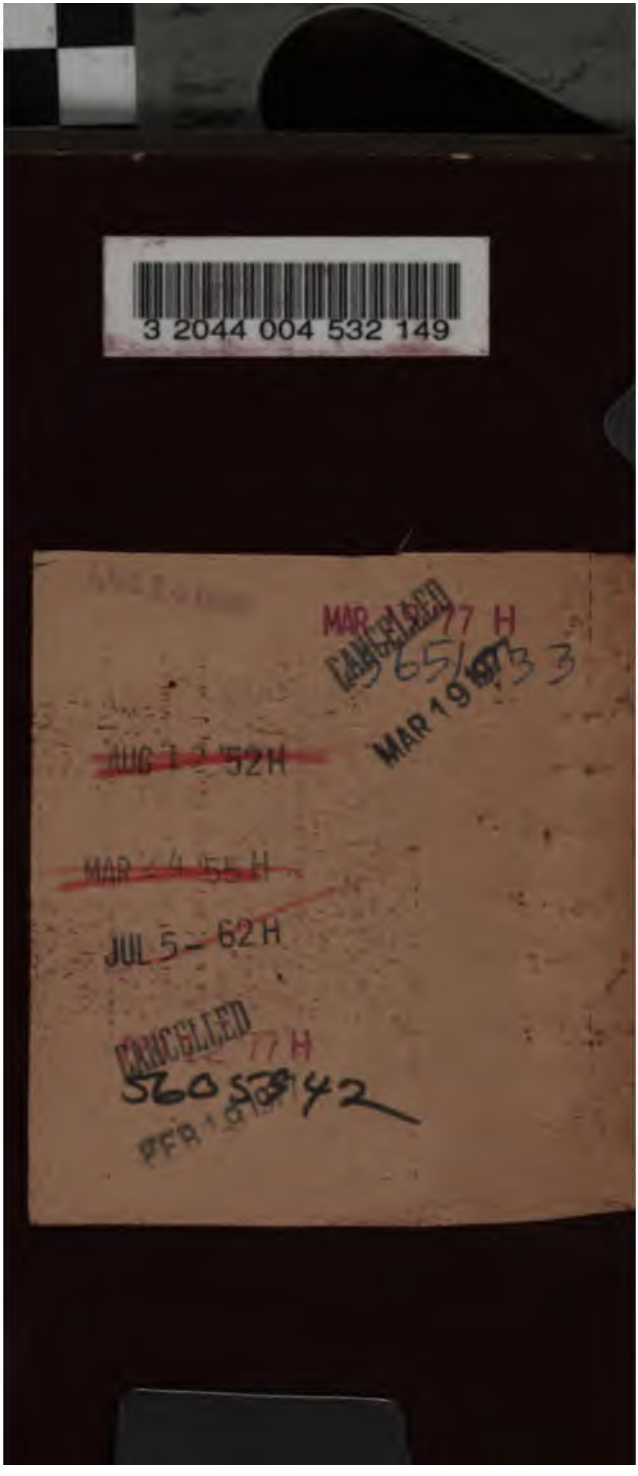
*New Year*, 1887.










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